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DIAMOND JUBILEE EDITION.

THE MESSAGE AND MINISTRATIONS
OF
DEWAN BAHADUR
R. VENKATA RATNAM,

M.A., L.T., F.M.U., M.L.C.,

Ex-Principal, Pittapur Rajah's College, Cocanada.

EDITED,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

BY

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R. V. Ratham.

· Om !

PREFACE.

THE present volume is a partial realisation of the cherished dream of many long years. It is the initial response to the imperative call of not a few respectable voices. In its immediate occasion, it is a concrete tribute of thanks-offering to the Giver of all graces and gifts for the Master's length of days just happily extended to their 'three score' years and for the exceeding richness of the dower dispensed through them. As for its possible value, besides its intrinsic worth for all truth-seekers and hero-worshippers, may it prove also a material link of closer fellowship, not only for the near coterie of personal fellow-disciples, but as well for the vastly wider circle of other friends, admirers and old pupils! At all events, here, it is trusted, will be found enough to bring to light 'a gem of purest ray serene' from 'the dark unfathomed caves of ocean'—one worthy of the name it bears.

‘ Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter ! ’

Even so is it, forsooth, with the interior life and experience of him whose Diamond Jubilee is thus sought to be commemorated through the publication of a few fragmentary notes of the 'soft pipe' that has 'played on' these several years, if only in quiet nooks and unnoticed corners. Even of the 'ditties of no tone' piped all along 'to the spirit'—and never once 'to the sensual ear'—it must remain a matter for intense regret that by far the bulk have blown forth entirely unrecorded. Altogether, in original production itself, the written word has been all too limited, as compared with the spoken.

Of the contents of this volume, only the first five under the section, "Addresses and Articles," belong to the former category. The rest, one and all, represent purely spontaneous and extempore utterances caught up and committed to paper with the inevitable imperfections of the amateur 'long-hand' (!) report in the course of an uncommonly rapid flow. For these invaluable love-labours of the 'recording' hand, no end of praise is due, as regards this volume, to Messrs.

K. Apparao, B.A., B.L., P. Ramaswamy, M.A., and M. Ramamurthi—a remarkable trio of *chithragupthas*, the first of the earlier and the last two of the later years at Cocanada, who, even while students, accomplished the trying task with an almost incredible degree of efficiency equalled only by their enthusiasm. All gratitude be to them for the precious materials kindly made available for such compiling, revising and editing as could be rushed through within hardly a month's time and amidst pressing pre-occupations! It is literally a fact that the deliverances, as thus reported, have never at any stage passed through the hands, or so much as come before the eye, of the Master himself—not even for the present purpose; and consequently, he will read them only now for the first time with the general public. As such, it cannot but be that the work has suffered in the attempt, at this distance of time, to do it up wherever necessary on account of the various blanks and blunders incidental to the said rough method of reproduction. Will the indulgent reader overlook all the resultant

editorial shortcomings? And may the ever-generous Master pardon, too, the presumption behind an enterprise kept clean out of his knowledge even!

The writings and discourses now brought out or by no means among the best or the most recent in stock. Their selection as well as classification has had to be somewhat haphazard through diverse exigencies. However, the years (as noted) of composition or delivery, stretching across the wide span from 1885 on to 1919, will serve to mark the varying degrees of merit. For they indicate the several stages of development alike of mind and art in a soul peculiarly alive and alert and constantly enriched and mellowed by study, thought, meditation and communion—all in a perpetual atmosphere of noble well-doing ‘twice blest.’

No adequately complete survey of the “Message and Ministrations” can be aimed at before the present volume is followed up with its intended successors. They must embody the golden stores yet in the barn and those still to be garnered, including the

sheaves of literary criticism and personal correspondence. For, these latter, in particular, possess a charm all their own as constituting, respectively the finest of light-flashes and the sweetest of love-missiles. God speed the humble but pious scheme with the needed encouragement and co-operation of friends far and near! Content, for the present, is found in the ready reprint, that follows as the Introductory Sketch (roughly retouched and enlarged to be fairly up-to-date), of a brief old 'study' written for *The Indian Messenger* on the eve of the Master's Presidentship of the Indian Theistic Conference in 1906.

To the good Maharajah Saheb of Pithapuram, C. B. E., the thanks of the heart are rendered for the aid of the purse in a cause equally dear on both sides.

COCANADA,
29 *September*, 1922. }

V. R.

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CORRECTIONS.

Page	Line	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
3	24	snd	and
12	14	Raja's	Rajah's
	20	hipes	hopes
17	3	tribulation	tribulation.
19	12	iu	in
25	12	Hc	He
27	11	ectasy	ecstasy
39	14	suggest	suggests
43	20	versatality	versatility
	24	eve rworthy	ever worthy
49	2	formor	former
63	3	pilanthropic	philanthropic
64	21	niraculous	miraculous
70	11	whale	whole
72	15	best,	best
101	2	require	required
	16	hnmbly	humble
106	5	catering	scaffolding
	25	understood	understand.
108	23	de	be
110	15	hnman	human
119	9	thy	Thy

Page	Line	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
127	15	eloquenthy	eloquently
128	18	Madam	Madame
130	24	paradoxical !	paradoxical
135	12	ecstasy	ecstasy
142	24	Nay	May
143	9	Beauty.	Beauty !
144	7	narrqw	marrow
145	12	horizans	horizons
158	3	love,	love.
170	14	ecstasy	ecstasy
171	17	nevar	never
172	2	ecstasy	ecstasy
	9	foodstool	footstool
175	13	rouses	rousest
	14	pronounces	pronouncest
190	2	ecstasy	ecstasy
	19	gravel	grovel
218	10	narrow	marrow
228	21	ment	mant
237	16	throughut	throughout
248	7	Acconplisher	Accomplisher
	9	prilgrimage	pilgrimage
249	24	confort	comfort
253	11	adoptest	adaptest
	23	saint	the saint
260	8	silents orrow	silent sorrow

Page	Line	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
269	3	adour	adore
271	10	ecstasy	ecstasy
272	14	orphanded	orphaned
276	3	pittyng	pitying
280	4	catterer	Caterer
282	22	poni-	peni-
284	25	Universe	the Universe
291	15	all sufficing	all-sufficing
293	4	the refuge	the refuge
299	12	triumppt	triumph

Page	Line	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
42	5	Rammoham	Rammohan
378	15	of what	what
397	9	less	loss
iv	6	or	are
v	4	respectively	respectively,
xvi	13, 14	illustratious	illustrious
xviii	6	<i>Poople's</i>	<i>People's</i>
xx	9	Ratnam:	Ratnam
xxxiv	10	author.	the author.
xxxv	2	footstore.	foot sore
xxxvi	24	rings	that rings
xxxviii	8	world	word

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

EXACTLY sixty years ago, belying the older look of today, Mr. R. Venkata Ratnam was born on *Maharnavami* in the year 1862 at Masulipatam, a town of historic interest on the East Coast and now the headquarters of Kistna District. Sprung of military blood on both the parental sides, he possesses a stalwart, well-built, imposing frame in which dwelt more robust health formerly than for the past few years. But the eyes are as expressive as ever under a portruding forehead indicative of a massive intellect.

His early education he received in Northern and Central India at places where his father, Shubedar Raghupatruni Appayya Naidu's regiment was stationed from time to time. Hence, while Telugu is his mother-tongue, his second language at school and college was Urdu; and he displays still a command over that language and an acquaintance with

its literature such as to challenge the admiration of many a learned Musalman. He read at the Zillah High School in Banda (U. P.) during the Head-mastership of Babu Dinanath Banerji with Babu Gangadhara Mukherji for the First Assistant. From the former expressions of kind commendation would be received from time to time in later life. And with the latter is associated, as will presently be seen, a lasting memory sacred through life. From Banda he proceeded to Hyderabad (Deccan) while in the Matriculation class, and thereby passed from the hands of two Bengalee teachers into those of a third, the well-known Dr. Aghornath Chattopadhyaya, then Head-master of the Nizam's Government High School. 'An ineffectual and fruitless 1½ months' there; and the young student shifted to St. George's Grammar School, Chudderghaut, then under an able Head-master, Mr. W. A. Home, to whom was due the first insight into a correct study of English.

A staunch Vaishnava devotee of the orthodox type like the bulk of the followers of his

calling, Shubedar Appaya Naidu brought up his son in strictly conservative ways ; and to the end of his life, in spite of sharp divergence of belief and practice, the masterful temper of the father always held the meek-spirited son in almost physical dread. During the early days of his association with the Brahma Samaj, Venkata Ratnam was, on one occasion, confined by his stern-natured father within a closed room, well-nigh starving for two days for the disobedience of persistent attendance at prayer-meetings. His interest in that great religious movement of modern India was first awakened at the Banda High School. The name of Rajah Rammohan Roy, found mentioned in a small text-book of Indian History as primarily responsible for the abolition of *Sati*, prompted his side-enquiry in the class as to who that good man was. The teacher, hailing from the Rajah's own province but no Brahmo himself, briefly described him as the founder of a new religious sect believing in One Only God and opposing itself to idolatry. This incidental hint set the thoughtful youth seriously a-thinking : he

felt cheered to find what he had not 'suspected,' the existence among the Hindus of an organised body that stood for a principle confirmatory of the already self-determining pointings of his own inner compass.

For University training he went up to the Madras Christian College, from which he graduated with Physical Science for his Optional Subject in 1885. Even in those early days, as earlier still, his friends and professors marked him out for his fine spirit and intellectual capabilities. To his *alma mater* and to the benign personality of the illustrious Rev. Dr. Miller, Mr. Venkata Ratnam has always retained a 'passionate devotion,' and year after year he takes a leading part in the celebrations of the 'College Day' at Madras; while this premier educational institution of the South is justly proud of him as one of her most brilliant and representative products. He had the honour to preside over the said annual functions with general approbation in the year 1916.

It was while pursuing his collegiate studies that he joined the Southern India Brahma

Samaj at Madras. As will be noted from the memorial address in this volume, "the decisive step" was due, before other human factors, to the first missionary visit to Madras in 1881 of Pandit Sivanath Sastri, thenceforth "always counted, always respected, always revered as my guru," "my soul's parent." Accordingly, a very recent letter under date August 30, 1922, denotes thus the precedence amongst the first three in "the gradation of intimate soul-deep 'affections'"—"the co-pilgrim (behind the veil these 33 years but never out of holy touch), the *guru* (similarly veiled exactly 30 years after) and the *Pradhan Acharya* (sightless to all but the 'Unseen') in far-off yet next-door Edinburgh." During the period in question, with the rich promise in him rapidly unfolding to its fulness by strenuous aspiration and activity, he began to drink deep of the formative influences of the metropolis. At that time, he felt considerably indebted for personal spiritual guidance, among others, to the late Mannava Butchayya Pantulu, then the leading spirit of the Madras Samaj. Then he read widely; he wrote free-

ly for the organs of the Samaj edited by himself—first the *Brahma Prakasika* and subsequently the *Fellow-Worker*.

For about a year after taking his Degree, he was connected with the editorial staff of a Madras Weekly known as *The People's Friend*. Then he joined as a teacher, first the Theistic High School, Rajahmundry, and next the C. M. S. High School, Ellore, from where he transferred himself to the Hindu High School, Masulipatam, for the two years 1887-88. He took his M. A. Degree in English language and literature in 1891 and the L. T. Degree in 1897 and for some time also pursued his studies for law. This latter course, however, was finally abandoned for his divinely-appointed vocation—that noblest of professions through which, in the Telugu country, his life has proved eminently helpful to the cause of enlightenment and progress. In 1892-93, he worked in Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, as an “able and agreeable” Assistant Professor of English, according to the testimony of the then Principal.

Later, for 5 years—from 1894 to 1898—he settled down once more in his own native-place of Masulipatam, amidst loved and loving ones, as Assistant Professor of English and History, besides being the Superintendent of the High School Department, in Noble College. There the fullest use was made of the varied opportunities of good work that offered themselves. He did good work as a Municipal Councillor. He was Chairman of the Primary Examination Board in Kistna for a term of three years. In particular, under the auspices of the local Social Purity Association, he opened a memorable campaign for Purity and against *Nautch* and soon enlisted the practical sympathy and support of influential and promising spirits and, with signal success, extended the crusade far and wide over the Telugu country. The Masulipatam Brahma Samaj, which had been in existence for over a decade and of which he had been a member since the days of his teachership in the Hindu High School, had been keeping up a languid life at the time through the devotion of a few old adherents. Now he threw himself

whole-heartedly into the work of this little, straggling Samaj and soon strengthened it and spread its beneficent influence for social and religious reform among the educated public and particularly the student section of the town. The vicissitudes of fortune of an unwelcome Theistic worker amid evangelical Christian surroundings took Mr. Venkata Ratnam away to another latitude in 1899, even because his influence was proved to have been too strong and sound and sober! The impress left behind elicited, however, even from the Head with whom he had to part company an unmeasured appreciation of the “conscientious and high-minded gentleman” in whom was lost “not only a colleague but a personal friend.” Later, too, when the Principalship of Pittapur Rajah’s College fell vacant in 1904, the same old authority, the Rev. C. W. A. Clarke, M.A., felt constrained thus to express himself, *suo moto*, to the College Council at Cocanada: “In my eighteen years’ experience of Indian education, I have not met a better teacher than Mr. Venkata

Ratnam nor have I met one whose personal influence amongst students was as powerful."

The next term of service was at Secunderabad as Head of Mahboob College, where, like the puissant Samson grinding at his mill, he laboured for 6 years, 1889-94, imparting the fragrance of his stainless character to the lascivious atmosphere of that luxury-laden city. And at the close of the chapter there early in 1905, Secunderabad more than vindicated itself in the high honour done, on a phenomenal scale, with valedictory addresses and other tokens of affectionate reverence and gratitude from a number of influential and representative institutions like the Deccan Social Purity and Temperance Association, the Deccan Social Reform Association, the Hope of India Lodge, No. 25, of the Independent Order of Good Templars, the Somasundaram Mudaliar Reading-Room and Library, the Anjuman-e-Mufidul Muslimin and the 'past and present' Parsee students of Mahboob College, besides, of course, the general body of students and the members of the staff. "To us he was all that Dr.

Arnold was to Rugby," wrote one long afterwards (in 1918) as a retrospect of those days.

The next removal from Moslem to Andhra environment was like the return of the exile to home-land. To the educational—teaching and organising—work done at Cocanada as Principal of Pittapur Rajah's College for nearly a decade and a half from February 1905 down to July 1919, enough testimony has been borne at different stages and from diverse quarters. The most fruitful, as also the longest, term of headship in the annals of the College commenced with the express aspiration (as per a letter, dated October 2, 1904) to realise its ends as "primarily a 'national' institution intended and calculated to be of some tangible use and help in moulding the India that is into the India that is to be—the 'promised land,' as Ranade puts it, in which are to be worked out and realised the world's desire and hope of union and harmony." "Exaggerated apprehensions and groundless allegations" as to aggressive socio-religious hostility took little time to melt away; and the confirmation

came by a unanimous vote, before time, after the very first year and at the instance of the very agencies that had opposed his introduction in the beginning. Yes; such is the irresistible charm of Mr. Venkata Ratnam's personality. Such has all along been his systematic career—to conquer hate by love. In fact, wherever he settled, he was at first dreaded and reviled as an unsparing denouncer of individual vices and national iniquities: nay, his very life amongst people was a silent rebuke to every species of unworthiness. But, in course of time, the strength of his character would shame all antipathy into abasement, admiration, assimilation. The completion of the first decade was observed as a festive event all-round; and the 'Address' of warm felicitations from the Staff extolled "the expansion of the Institution, in all its departments, to nearly three times what it was when you assumed charge and the more than tenfold increase in the College Department alone" as, "by itself, an eloquent testimony to the earnest care, fatherly solicitude and pious

devotion with which you have discharged the stewardship so judiciously and confidently committed to your charge." Again, " During this happy interval, it has been the good fortune of the Staff and all connected with the interests of the College to see its affairs placed on a permanent footing and to find in the highly-honoured Rajah (now Maharajah) Garu of Pittapuram a patron and rock of support". Likewise did the Students, in their valedictory words on the eve of the final retirement, " proudly rejoice to feel that your name will for long years be venerated by the Andhra student as identical with genius and erudition, sympathy and charity, purity and self-consecration." Visitors of eminence like Provincial Governors and Executive Councillors as well as the official University Commissioners came from time to time to convey the same commendation and carry the same conviction. Among the administrative improvements of a far-reaching character were: the reconstitution of the Management, the free admission of girls and of members

of the 'depressed classes' and the enforcement of the principle of strict religious neutrality at school. This last-named position is particularly noteworthy, strange as it certainly appears in a leader of reform like Mr. Venkata Ratnam. But with him—to quote again from the letter of October 1904—"the work to be done at school is clear-cut, with a precise aim—culture and character. Polemical theology or controversial sociology has no place there. An abiding sense of the Deity, a welling love for Humanity, a solemn respect for self—that is all that is needed."

What wonder, what offence, if ideals at once so pure and exalted and so scrupulously and systematically pursued have gone, in effect, to transfigure the class-room itself into a temple? A critical scholar and an impressive teacher naturally endued with in-seeing sympathy with, and practically realising a holy harmony between, both the gay and the grave aspects, the L'Allegro and the Il Penseroso elements, of life and nature—Mr. Venkata Ratnam's masterly expositions of

the deep philosophy of Shakespeare and Carlyle, Wordsworth and Tennyson, have constituted in themselves not only an intellectual treat but also a spiritual stimulus known only to those who have had the good fortune to sit and learn at his feet. Again, as to the larger ministry outside the pale of direct school-work during the long years given to Cocanada, suffice it to point to the 'fruit gathering' of the following pages by way of samples of the self-expression through the media of the Young Men's Prayer Union, new-planted like the Young Men's Social Purity and Temperance Union, and of the local Brahma Samaj, already existent but soon reinvigorated.

A passing note may here be made of the variety of useful public movements prominently associated with and participated in at different times and centres. In his own vocational line, Mr. Venkata Ratnam presided more than once (at Vijianagaram and Masulipatam) over the Northern Circars Students' Conference which he had himself helped to create. He has repeatedly been on

the Board of Examiners, besides being a Fellow, of the Madras University. He sat on the S.S.L.C. Board for the triennium 1916-18. He was called to give evidence before the Public Service Royal Commission in 1914. He was made responsible in 1918 for the formulation of a scheme of Moral Instruction in Secondary Schools. And he has served as Chairman of the Government Education Re-organisation Committee recently formed. Apart from these, he was a member of the Godavari District Board and the Vice-President of the Cocanada Taluk Board for 6 years, besides being in the local Municipal Council for several terms. He presided over the Kistna Political and Social Conferences at Guntur in 1898, the Provincial Social Conference at Ramipet (North Arcot) in 1904, the Northern Circars Theistic Conference at Rajahmundry and the Kistna and Guntur Social Conferences at Narsaraopeta in 1905, the All-India Theistic Conference at Calcutta in 1906 (the Presidential Address of which appears in this volume), the Adi Dravida Conference at Amalapuram and the Anti-Non-

Co-operation Conference at Cocanada in 1921. Again, with the R. V. M. G. Ramarao Bahadur Orphanage at Cocanada, founded in 1909, he will ever be associated as its prime architect, even to the planning of the magnificent buildings. In fact, in ever so many other instances, his has been the inspiration behind the renowned bounty of the noble Prince of Pithapuram. In a word, learning and wisdom, charity and piety, have combined to make his remarkable personality a whole institution in itself. Upon a life of such high-toned and many-sided activities the seal of Government recognition was set by the conferment of the titles of Rao Bahadur and Dewan Bahadur in 1912 and 1918 respectively and, later still, by nomination to the Reformed Provincial Legislative Council, where they have now duly learnt to seek and value his sage counsel as one of the elected Deputy Presidents. In his earlier days, Mr. Venkata Ratnam used to take a keen interest and an active part in direct political work; and his discourses on the Indian National Congress, delivered in the eighties, are fondly

remembered as fixing the high water-mark of his vigorous eloquence.

This magnificent faculty of eloquence Mr. Venkata Ratnam possesses in a striking measure, though with him it is practically an uncultivated art of nature. The words always run before the thoughts in public utterance ; and, spell-bound, you witness a rushing torrent of language laden with a wealth of imagery, allusion, anecdote, illustration and quotation, flowing with a rapidity which proves the despair of the expert reporter. Calm and sedate starts the thought ; and as it careers along its lofty flight, height after height, in all its manifold applications, periods upon periods of balanced sentences invest it with an impassioned and impressive expression. Truly, how God has vouchsafed the gift of effective speech to the leaders of the Brahma Samaj with an ample hand ! And of these the subject of this sketch is no mean representative. For, with all his remarkable powers, he has “ uttered nothing base ” but his “ words are always half-battles for the true.” Aye, so he has spoken ; for so he has lived. In the whole

record of his varied work, including the three and thirty years of educational service amidst Christian, Muhammadan and Hindu surroundings, "he never lowered his flag", as the *Christian College Magazine* aptly put it in commendation of his 'Rao Bahadur' distinction.

"Half-battles for the true"! 'Nay, it is far from proper to say that his is a combative, militant nature. A born fisher of men, he never once betrays himself into the least little obtrusion of himself or his views. Rather, as a candle unconsciously throws its beams, he is a silent radiating centre of illumination in whose presence it slowly becomes impossible to think a mean thought or utter a debasing word. Those who only know of him or know him but from a distance often fancy him too prone to impress himself dogmatically upon others or to imbue them didactically with his fad-distic views of things. Suspicious hostility thus fears aggressive proselytism in him; but at the same time its very absence, in truth, is exactly what he is blamed for by some sympathising friends. The fact is, he simply lives

his ideals and is content to leave the life to preach itself. He is a firm believer in the conscious up-building of character in each individual life ; and his one aim is more and more to acquire and impart a healthy tone to the inner springs of conduct in growing accord with the Will of the All-Holy through the varied relations of life. Accordingly, not even his worst calumniators, however much they may fall foul of his heresy and heterodoxy, would ever raise the slightest breath of a whisper against his own unimpeachable character ; while association with him is accepted as a sufficient passport for general integrity in his friends and followers. The root of all these outward excellences lies in his inner spiritual experiences. With him, recreation, morality, reform, all are organically related to religion. His is constitutionally a temper full of hilarity ; he is habitually fond of company ; and in social circles he laughs and plays with the bounding enthusiasm of a pleasure-seeker, ever ready with sallies of wit and humour, with apt anecdote and endless conversation, though never self-indulgent,

self-obtrusive or even self-conscious. But deep down this apparent—let me add also, transparent—outburst of merriment, there runs a clear under-current of solemn purpose, even the unbending of the spirit for its own strengthening and the realisation of the conviction that the God we own is a God of Joy and Bliss Eternal. A perusal of the article on “Religion and Recreation” will illustrate this habitually elevated standpoint even to the stranger. Again, if he is generous in his private charities—and these, extensive for his limited means, are such that the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doeth—it is, not for the love of a good name or even out of pity for want and woe, but primarily for the vindication of the unfailing providence of Love Eternal. He cannot bear that the destitute and the distressed should feel that, wherever they go, they must only knock against iron-walls of destiny and that the Ruler of this Universe is but a ruthless tyrant magnified into infinity. So he picks up a family of orphan-waifs by the rail-road and makes them as more than children unto

himself. So he supports the Ohennapuri Anna-dana Samajam as one of its devoted workers since its foundation. And so, in a word, he cannot say 'no' to any call for succour from any quarter. Or again, born as a meat-eater, he turns a strict vegetarian on principle, extremely sensitive to the sin of helping to take away a life none can give. Furthermore, in his staunch advocacy of the cause of social purity and its natural corollary, the anti-naught movement, with which perhaps his name is best identified in the public mind both within and without the Madras Presidency, he takes high ground, maintaining that "purity is to character what symmetry is to beauty—not an accident of adornment but an essential of structure" and that "piety without purity is baser than gross superstition—it is sanctified sin;" and decrying "the custom that invites undisguised shame to the hall of honour or restores convicted impurity to the place of position." It was in this spirit, that, against over-powering odds, he led the agitation in the famous "Norton incident" on the Congress

platform of 1894. It is also in this spirit that he has produced his really monumental essay in the Hon'ble Mr. C. Y. Chintamani's publication on "Indian Social Reform"—a thesis in which he has given us of his best and to which, pending its reappearance in this series, the reader may profitably turn once more to measure the ethical and spiritual grandeur as well as the literary greatness of author. Also, pre-eminent among Mr. Venkata Ratnam's distinctive traits is his peculiar devotion to the ideal of monogamy. Possessed with a profound sense of the sublime sanctity of the marriage relation, he holds, to quote his own pregnant words, that "the true test of monogamy is the monocracy of the whole heart by the one all-endearing, as the true mark of monotheism is the monolatry, with the whole soul, of the One All-Sufficient." "Those never loved who dream that they loved once," said Mrs. Browning. After 5 brief years of wedded life, it has fallen to Mr. Venkata Ratnam's own lot, since the close of his twenty-seventh year, to concretise

this supremely exalted ideal in himself. Along the footstore path of the weary widowed race, however, there shines the light of the "larger hope," the hope beyond the grave, which proclaims, with Emerson, in silent tones of solace :

"Hearts are dust ; hearts' loves remain,
Heart's love will meet Thee again."

Thus to the eye of living faith, there is no death but only transition, and the chastening ministrations of sorrow tend to cure the repining of the soul and deepen its resignation to the Divine decree, as witness the touching memorial outpourings in this volume. Accordingly, tender in heart and strong in affections, Mr. Venkata Ratnam has taught himself and taught us the precious lesson to *feel* the stroke of affliction like a woman but to *face* it also like a man. And if, albeit this rigid monogamist position, Mr. Venkata Ratnam—greatly to the bewilderment of superficial critics—lends his warm support to the cause of the remarriage of women, it is fundamentally because of the very anxiety

to elevate the marriage ideal to the lofty pedestal of Ruskin's "single love" that he insists on *liberty* for the widowed to rebuild a home in view to the ends of self-realisation. For, what moral value, after all, can attach to the celibacy induced by social coercion, and how far is it compatible with the acknowledged sublimity of the matrimonial relationship?

As already noted, the key-note to this happy combination of culture and character is furnished by Mr. Venkata Ratnam's personal religiousness. Penetrate into the deep-hidden folds of his inner being, and you soon discover that his main-spring in life is God-consciousness,—or rather, the haunting sense of want of God-consciousness and the utter self-abasement of the unregenerate nature, itself a living symptom of ceaseless spiritual growth. "Nearer, my God, nearer to Thee" is, indeed, the silent song of his heart, rising above and regulating the outer music of all his life. This is the one distinctive under-note rings through all the succeeding pages. With him, as we may

observe, it is a profanation to give a capital G to any Proper Noun save to the dearest name of all, that of 'the Nameless of the hundred names.'

Little wonder that Mr. Venkata Ratnam, with the magnetic power that makes disciples, has made close friends and followers in several places far and near. For each one of them, he has a distinct corner in his capacious heart not meant for others; and kind, courteous and accessible to all, he maintains individual relations with these. In spite of himself, the pink of his pupils perforce must always be won for the cause of the true, the good and the right and be bound to him by the silver links and silken ties of gratitude and reverence. "I have elected to be a teacher more for the sacred responsibilities and noble opportunities than for the ample emoluments of the profession. Accordingly, I have been desirous of living, God knows to what purpose, a life from which the young—the hope of our dear land—may take a hint or two." (1904). For this "spoiling" of youth, obloquy often becomes his portion. But, with

Socratic serenity, he sustains himself with the thought, "Can a soul's brother be acquired at a less cost than the worst that man may say?" Hence, no Theistic believer or body, no liberal-minded spirit among high and low in the walks of public or private life, in the Northern Circars but has derived inspiration from his noble soul. No harsh word upon his lip, no graceless ruffle in his temper, simple and austere in habit, "wearing all that weight of learning lightly like a flower" in all humility, he cannot but strike even the casual, distant observer as a beautiful example of plain living and high thinking. "You are living here the life of an anchorite" was what a discerning visitor once remarked in his home.

Shortcomings there are in the fruitful, if not eventful, life delineated above. But this life and the life of the ever-venerated Rao Bahadur Veeresalingam Pantulu, such as they are, make up the two hemispheres of one glorious orb of illumination for us in the Southern Presidency—Venkata Ratnam the sage, Veeresalingam the hero; the one with his ideal of saintliness and passion for worship,

the other with his ideal of righteousness and passion for work ; the one an *influence* to mould the aspirations, the other a *force* to direct the energies—both, the twin-stars that have swayed, and shall long sway, the southern horizon. Blessed be the name of the Holy Spirit of Love that has vouchsafed us these invaluable gifts in the fellowship of the Brahma Samaj for the good of Andhra and unto the glory of Mother Ind !

V. R.

ADDRESSES

AND

ARTICLES

I
THE SPIRIT OF RAJAH RAMMOHAN ROY :
Presidential Address,
INDIAN THEISTIC CONFERENCE, CALCUTTA.
(1906.)

At a Theistic Conference a president in flesh and blood is a concession to custom—at best a recognition of human limitation. In the present instance it is a mere formality. The generous but mistaken partiality of some brethren forces into this position—no doubt, a great honor when deserved—a humble and obscure individual who, more than content with his Heaven-ordained lot in life, should have been so happy to be left alone like a weak, tender plant in its secluded cranny. But brotherly persuasion, exercised with such tact and sweetness, has drawn him out; and now he throws himself on fraternal indulgence and clemency. The loving-kindness, shown in such richness in various ways, by the Brahmos of Bengal to their sisters and brethren of Madras is entitled to hearty and

grateful acknowledgment; and this may sympathetically be viewed as a humble tribute that deep gratitude pays to unstinted generosity. It may, possibly, also afford an opportunity to see whether the bread of truth that Bengal has cast from time to time on the waters of life in the south has been vouchsafed any return. Apart, however, from these considerations, the sense of the unfitness of the person for the position is too oppressively heavy to sustain but for the trust that the counsels and the conduct of the Theistic Conference are in the charge of the Supreme One, whose unerring guidance is ever accorded to all confiding souls. Whosoever may physically fill this seat—whether wisely and worthily as at Benares or merely mechanically as now—after all, the Lord God is the true President—the guiding Genius and sustaining Strength—of this Conference. In a gathering convened and conducted by His grace every heart is an oracle of His voice, and every soul a shekinah of His spirit. At His holy call have come, with expectant hearts and pilgrim steps, scores of those that

have long cherished and honoured this city as the cradle of modern Indian Theism—a place ever dear and ever sacred as the home and the field of the life-work of the immortal saints and patriarchs of the Brahma Samaj. When we remember that it is chiefly here that a rare succession of Heaven-inspired souls has, so prayerfully and disinterestedly, toiled through three generations to realise and reveal a God-vision of surpassing glory, we feel that we stand on holy ground. If to this be added the significant fact that hither, to this hall, now converge from all parts of a vast country, with its divergent contents of race and language, creed and custom—from Sindh and Quetta to the Khasi Hills and Sylhet, from Lahore and Simla to Tinnevely and Calicut—thousands of hearts that one Faith fills, one Hope sustains and one Love binds together, surely the Theistic Church justifies itself as an organisation of national import. How the Theistic spirit has pervaded the whole nation in holier faith and purer worship, in loftier moral ideals and wider sympathies, in higher conceptions of

the destinies of the race and richer expectations of the promise and possibilities of the nation; in ampler visions of the manifestation of God in man and in nature and in more catholic appreciation of Truth as the universal revelation of the All-wise, in prompter willingness to combine and co-operate on the broad basis of humanity and in keener endeavour to further an all-round progress, is patent to all thoughtful and impartial observers. How the Theistic Church has fostered quite a host of Heaven-illuminated souls that, from the days of Rammohan Roy to those of Ranade and Anandamohan Bose, have rendered yeoman's service in the country's cause in all directions, is now a matter of history. Such, in general terms, are the considerations that call forth our grateful thanks to the Great Giver of all good, that stamp the Theistic Church as a national movement of high aim and vast inherent power, and that place on us—individually and collectively—the sacred obligation of cheerfully and actively dedicating ourselves to be humble instruments of the Supreme Wielder of the destinies of nations.

Again, how cheering, how inspiring to the hearts of us all this most beautiful spectacle is! Here we are, sisters and brothers, many of us meeting one another perhaps for the first time, and yet feeling quite at home as if in the bosom of one family, as if nestled in the embrace of one Divine Mother. Not a joint push for increased political powers, not a common effort for social emancipation, not a united aspiration to clothe the motherland with the wealth of improved industries—intimately dear though these, one and all, be to us—none of these, is the immediate occasion for this gathering. It is the holy affinity of heart to heart, it is the God-inspired love of soul for soul, it is the Heaven-woven tie of kindred faith and aspiration, that is the motive-power of this meeting. The fellowship of spirit which is the bed-rock of social structure, the innermost resort of human intercourse, is typified in this Conference. Here we behold the great glory of the Divine Inspirer of all righteousness in the miracles that He has wrought in the hearts and souls of thousands who, attracted

by the spell of His beauty and led by the light of His truth, realise, may be in different degrees of clearness, that verily this life, with its chastening discipline and sustaining trust, its tender griefs and holy endeavours, its quickening sympathies and uplifting aspirations, its sacred instincts and sublime visions, is an avenue to heaven—nay, is a present paradise. Here we observe that, beneath changes and fluctuations, amidst seeming clashes and conflicts, despite apparent differences and divisions, the Holy Spirit is unfolding itself in ever-increasing grandeur even through the steady spread of culture, the sustained march of progress and the irresistible triumph of truth. Here, of a fact, we are, in a most re-assuring manner, confirmed in the faith we have all along held so dear to us that Divine Revelation—the influx of the Divine into the human mind—is a ceaseless current; that the Eternal Indweller in all souls is now, as ever, a moving power and an illumining light; and that the chapter of the doings of Divine Grace in the hearts and homes of

mankind closes not till the close of time. Now we see, not in dim, distant dream, but in close and clear perception, in direct vision, the immediate contact—nay, the inseparable though mysterious commingling, the inalienable and ever-deepening interfusion, of the Master and the servant, the Preceptor and the pupil, the Deity and the devotee, in all the concerns of life. Now we rejoice—aye, feel almost overawed—to observe how dear each soul is to its Great Source, even as the promising, darling child to the discerning, loving parent; how the destiny of every one of us is wisely shaped and lovingly finished by the all-seeing providence and all-cherishing love of our God; and how the active presence of the Eternal Witness and Mentor in every heart is evidenced, not only in the serenity of saintliness and the trust of martyrdom, but also and equally well in the sigh of sorrow for righteousness, in the search of ignorance for truth, in the longing of doubt for faith, and in the yearning of languor for life. Such, in brief, are the

inspiring lessons of this charming spectacle of the Theistic Conference. Render we our devout thanks to our God for this, His great good-tidings !

Next comes the question of the nature and the object of the Theistic Conference. What has this large number of fellow-believers from all parts of India come to seek to do and to realise ? What is the spirit that pervades and animates this Conference ; what is the ideal it keeps in view ; what is the end it tries to further ? At the last Conference it was resolved that this is to be a deliberative, advisory and devotional meeting. It is to serve as a valuable opportunity for comparing and verifying our various experiences, for taking stock, as it were, of our strength and our weakness, of our hopes and our fears, of our joys and our sorrows, as Theists. Then, out of the manifold suggestions of these consultations our leaders and workers will devise a practical plan for more faithful and sustained efforts to augment and consolidate our strength. Lastly, in individual as

well as in united worship, divine blessing will be invoked, divine guidance will be sought, and divine strength will be implored, for the accomplishment of what we all honestly believe to be the work of God to be done alike in us and around us. May the felt presence of Him from Whom all wisdom comes cheer and sustain this Conference throughout its proceedings !

Incomparably important is the object, the ultimate end, that the Theistic Church would prayerfully aspire to realise. Devoutly seeking to present to this ancient land, with its increasing complexities of existence—both public and private—an ideal of life at once contemplative and active, varied and harmonised, engaging and elevating ; and earnestly endeavouring to indicate to this renascent people a source of inspiration and strength alike pure and perennial, the Church that we have been delegated to represent feels commissioned from on high to subserve, vigorously and joyfully, even the ever-progressing, though to our mortal eyes the far-off, event of the enthronement of the

Supreme Spirit in the hearts of all. By evidence flowing in increasing volume from all directions the conviction is borne in that the cause of pure—spiritual, liberal, hopeful, catholic—theism is the cause of the future; that the dispensation of the Brahma Samaj is the gospel of the new age. It is becoming abundantly clear that, in the general trend of modern thought and aspiration towards a deep and enduring faith broad-based on the human intuitions and affections, a steady and ceaseless inspiration from the All-permeating into every expectant soul, an open and direct access for every reverent soul to the world-wide sanctuary of the Ever-adorable One, a wide and sympathetic outlook on human kind as knit in one divine kinship, a devout and grateful appreciation of truth and prophecy with their several correlated expressions as radically one, a strong and cheering hope of God's saving good falling at last to all, and a ready and loving dedication of human energies to the service of the world as a natural concomitant to the worship of God—that in this trend of modern thought

and aspiration there is a most re-assuring testimony to the supreme worth of the ideals and the activities always characteristic of (and once wholly special to) the Monotheistic Church of India here symbolised in this Conference. This self-same confirmation of our prevailing faith and hope by the voice and the conscience of a large and increasing section of cultured and courageous humanity would, however, seem, to my mind, to mark this out as a very fitting occasion for our earnestly and prayerfully endeavouring to realise in some fulness the central aim and the essential purpose of our church ; and methinks the time that may kindly have been allotted to my remarks will advantageously be devoted to a statement, such as should lie in my humble power to make, of what I hold to be the paramount duty of us, Indian Theists.

Proceeding then to this somewhat responsible task, I may compress my idea of the aim and purpose of the Brahma Samaj into one sentence : it is to realise in each one of us and to communicate to our sisters and brethren all around.

THE SPIRIT OF RAJAH RAMMOHAN ROY.

I am aware of the disadvantage of an attempt to distil a whole thesis into a single phrase; but with the request that I may be judged by the spirit of what I submit, I venture to adopt this as my key-note. To assimilate and to apply the spirit of the illustrious founder of the Brahma Samaj, not only as regards this church but also in relation to the larger life of the whole nation—nay, if we can, of the entire race—is, I believe, the divine call to us. I beg it may be marked that I do not plead that the Raja's opinions shall, in every instance be infallibly binding on his followers, that his methods shall be unquestioningly copied, or even that his range shall for ever limit our energies. What I take leave to urge as the mission of the Brahma Samaj is, to be vivified by his spirit—to imbibe his principles, to realise his hopes, to glow with his aspirations, to further his aims, to sustain his work—in a word, to cherish his memory by reproducing (may I say, reincarnating?) him, no doubt with

inevitable modifications, in the heart and the life of modern India. For, as Prof. Max Muller has observed, "the common root" of all the sections of the Theistic Church "is the work done, once for all, by Rammohan Roy;" and "in one form or another, under one name or another, I feel convinced that work will live." The spirit of the Rajah is of the very essence of the New Age and is ordained to endure. Blessed are they that will strive to immortalise it!

Next, we shall try concretely to realise that spirit—to determine its distinguishing features, to trace out its workings and to sum up its results. To my mind, Rammohan Roy is distinctly different from the other great men of India before his day. He is the father of a new race of Indian heroes. He heralds a new epoch in Indian History. His illustrious predecessors—mighty souls that have so richly dowered India with truth and goodness by their holy careers—were mostly sages, a few philanthropists, some patriots. But he was the first and (let me add) the *greatest nation-builder* that India has.

produced. His spirit ramified into diverse branches covering the whole area of national life. In his career is illustrated the harmonious play of that cycle of forces which, by their conjoint operation evolve and shape out a modern nation. In range of vision, in reach of sympathy, in versatility of powers, in variety of activities, in co-ordination of interests and in coalescence of ideals—in fine, as realising an all-round, all-receptive life in its manifold fulness, Rammohan Roy is a unique figure in the history of India, if not, in the annals of the race. I may attempt to illustrate this by a reference to this, our National Week. Here is the national life, as it were, attracted to and centred in the Metropolis. Here is a round of gatherings—Congress and Conferences—calculated by their deliberations and subsequent working to foster the growth of a sound, steady, complete nation. In the whole hierarchy of Indian Worthies, is there another name that evinces equal fitness with that of Rajah Rammohan Roy to be the ruling spirit of this great week, the presiding

genius of all these gatherings? Is not their very mutual appreciation amidst their manifold activities an emblem of his spirit? Verily, he is the Father of modern India; he is the *Rishi* of the modern age.

That we may appreciate this fact in its large import, I shall crave permission to recapitulate the salient points—of course, quite familiar to all here—of his eventful life. Mysterious, no doubt, are very often the ways of God; yet patent, to the believing soul, is His benevolent providence that directs the energies and shapes the destinies of mankind in its larger groupings of nations. History is, as it has been happily termed, the universal Bible—the true ‘God’s Book’—even as a revelation of His goodness and glory manifested in such timely and fitting grant of those great makers of epochs and ages whom a grateful world, with a touch of soul’s poetry, names the “chosen ones” of Heaven. Such a one, beyond all doubt, was Rammohan Roy. Never was the country in more urgent need of a spirit that would recall it to the righteous ways of the Lord, conjure up her

drooping spirits into hopeful service, and focus her scattered energies into a united strength. Man's necessity is God's opportunity. The spirit of India, laid low in the dust by the sheer exhaustion of internal division and strife, groaned for a great unifier and re-invigorator; and Mercy deputed Rammohan. Let us remember he was born in 1772. Let us review the condition of the country at that day. With knowledge confined to a microscopic few, with the spirit of the mediæval religious revival exhausted or transformed into domineering militarism, with ceremony usurping the place of religion and superstition elbowing out reason, with the sense of the One Supreme God dissipated into a myriad pantheon, with race set against race in mortal hostility and caste distinctions accentuated into haughtiness or servility, with natural feelings atrophied by mortifying practices and morality fossilised into unthinking custom, with kingdoms set up and blown down like bubbles and victories celebrated by devastation or forced conversion, with property arbitrary as anarchy and intercourse

forbidden by insecurity, this ancient land was in the very throes of a huge trial and tribulation—limb torn from limb, hand raised against hand, heart turning away from heart. Into the midst of this dark, dreary scene was let down Rammohan, strong-willed and tender-hearted, keen-witted and noble-souled. He had passed through a befitting training and discipline: he had fraternised with different schools of learning in their cloistered seclusion, he had plunged into the predominant theologies at their prime sources; he had communed with nature in her sublime solemnity; he had imbibed the sanctities of the world with the keen ardour of a truth-seeker and the reverent avidity of a sensitive soul; he had mixed with his kind in busy bustle, he had widened his vision with extensive travels; he had passed through the ordeal of domestic chastisement and social ostracism; he had mourned for the victims of dire famine; he had writhed in heart at the ghastly sight of the immolations of superstition at the fane of that “hood-winked queen” of the unthinking—

flint-hearted custom ; but also he had caught the dawning glimpse of a coming light ; he had heard the gentle whisper of an advancing hope ; he had felt the first pulse of a returning strength ; he had perceived the vision of an abiding harmony amidst the internecine strifes. Here was one that could truly say, “ Whatever concerns man is dear to me ; my heart is the home of all the race.” Such was the rich out-fit with which he set out on his great life-journey as the forerunner of a new era ; such was the arduous novitiate served out by this bringer of a new message to India—perchance to the world.

Comprehensive past all comparison as was the Rajah’s view of a full life, he was essentially a religious genius. He knew that human growth was endogenous—from the soul outwards. He was sure that out of the heart were all the issues of life. His faith in the saving, regenerating power of the Spirit was unbounded. To him a being not illumined by belief and trust in God, a progress not impelled by a religious force, was worse than inconceivable—it was degenerating,

degrading. To the myriad ills of India the sovereign remedy was a living faith in a wise and living God—neither a cloistered faith that scorns and shuns society, nor a busy careworn faith that assigns the leisure hour to a hurried worship, nor the prudent faith that imports a God to watch a truant world, nor yet a speculative faith that prefixes a creator to a law-governed universe. It was a direct vision of an indwelling Glory, a personal communion with an immanent Spirit, an implicit trust in an all-regulating Providence, a whole-hearted devotion to an all-controlling Purpose, a cheerful obedience to an all-governing Will, a conscious participation in an all-saving Grace, a rapturous delight in an all-entrancing Beauty. It was a faith to which the universe was a consecrated temple, the soul a holy shrine, conscience a sacred oracle, duty a divine ordinance, truth the imperishable gospel, love the perfect rule, life a progressive pilgrimage, humanity an abounding grace. It was a faith that interpreted law as the method, force as the will, and matter as the localised

potency, of God; it was a faith that esteemed the world as a reflection, the soul as a vision, and history as a panoramic presentation of the nature and the purpose of the Deity. With Rammohan Roy the man, this faith—this sublime, invigorative theism—was a passion, a power and a joy that made of him a hero and a prophet. To Rammohan Roy the nation-builder, this vital, fertile faith—a faith lofty as the love of God and ample as the wants of man—furnished alike the enduring basis and the cementing strength, the ample range and the towering greatness, of a united and vigorous nation. The deep, perennial source of this quickening faith he found welling up, in increasing volume and purity, from the heart of humanity. Religion he held to be a natural, irresistible instinct in mankind; it came out with the irrepressible spontaneity of a craving, an appetite that knew no satisfaction till it realised itself in a felt contact with what was believed to be the Supreme. This, the key-note of his religious message, he struck in what was perhaps his maiden

work—*Tuhfatul Muwahhidin*—a most remarkable pamphlet, at once terse as ‘wit,’ direct as sincerity, penetrating as insight, and comprehensive as genius, could make it. In it he gently limned out those grand truths of a vital and progressive Theism of which his whole life, as a man of letters and a man of action, presented so rich and inspiring an example: viz., the eternal verity of the religious sense; the essential unity of divine truth; the inexorable uniformity of divine law; the inviolable right of spiritual freedom; the impartial universality of divine inspiration; the increasing glory of divine vision; the inevitable fluctuations and varieties of religious expression; the imperative duty and the incalculable worth of spiritual worship; the manifest obligation of tolerance and sympathy; the mutual fulfilment of faith and service in love. This message of a whole-souled faith in an All-perfect God and a whole-hearted love for an ever-expanding humanity runs through his works with an intensity of conviction, a buoyancy of hope, a wealth of application

and a persistence of purpose, that are undoubtedly marvellous for his times and surroundings. Verily, he is a most impressive instance, as has been observed, of divine illumination even in the darkest of ages and amidst the dreariest of prospects.

This spirit of a deep and broad faith he proceeded to apply to, and realise in, the national life. The work of Rammohan Roy, as of every great *nation-builder*, was four-fold : to reassess the national heritage, to replenish the national resources, to infuse a new quickening and harmonising spirit, and to use the awakened energies for the new national wants and demands.

1. The hope and assurance of a reviving nation springs largely from its "storied past." Therein lies the evidence of national possibilities, the guarantee of national solvency and in a large measure the impetus to national endeavour. The inspiration of the ancestral example is the cheering outlook of the dutiful successor ; the acquisition of the sturdy sire the starting capital of the

ambitious son; the glory of past national achievement the load-star—the light on the path—of the advancing generations. India's wealth, her richest acquisition and her highest achievement, is the sublime consciousness, the vision, of the all-permeating and all-transfiguring, all-embracing and all-fulfilling, all-absorbing and all-transcending Spirit. Limitations—nay, aberrations—there might be; but the distinguishing mark, the predominant note, the prime concern, of blessed *Bharatararsha* is God-consciousness. The central principle, the master-passion, the 'driving power,' of her accredited worthies is God-vision. To trace the lineaments and study the ways, to follow the foot-steps and bow to the will, to imitate the purposes and reproduce the nature—in a word, to realise and fulfil oneself as a projected emblem—of the Divine Spirit is the one prevailing national ideal, surviving all vicissitudes; and to have saved from oblivion, purified from accretions, and re-adjusted for modern needs this indwelling Theistic spirit of India was the Rajah's high service to the nation.

His translations of the Upanishads, his elucidation of the Vedanta, his exposition of *Gayatri*, his defence of Hindu Theism, his advocacy of spiritual worship, his passionate pleading for a devout life as incomparably superior to the most engrossing ceremonialism—all these were suggested and sustained by that patriotic and nation-building purpose of re-instating a living liberal faith amidst clogging symbolism and enervating superstition. He re-directed the national intellect to the teachings of the ancient national scriptures and re-opened the national soul to the inspiration of the most honoured national seers. He re-iterates with tireless insistence, and pleads with glowing earnestness, that the most authoritative prophecy of India proclaims the absolute unity, the profound incomprehensibility and the sole-omnipotence of the Supreme Being ; recognises Him alone as the object of worship and obedience, and His worship alone as the way to beatitude ; claims only for His worship in spirit and in truth the virtue of efficacy ; and declares the inseparability of

pure morality from true worship. His heart deplores that the nation lost itself in a maze of observances and stultified itself by bowing before uninspiring ideals; his soul grieves that the one holy inner shrine of the Eternal Spirit was deserted for the host of outer fanes where no grace dwelt and no glory shone. He urges the imperative duty, as he asserts the inalienable right, of every individual soul to approach and to adore, in reverence and in praise, the Almighty Author of all. He declares and assures that the salvation of India lay entirely in the consecration of the nation's heart and might to the worship and the service of that "One only without a second" that the pick of the national conscience and the national scripture ever faithfully clung to.

It may be worth while dwelling a little on the happy spirit in which the genius of Rammohan Roy interpreted and used the national scripture. World-old, perhaps, is the conflict between the so-called national and the so-called rational instincts of man; yet in their harmony lies the wise

conservation and the confident progress of the spirit of a nation. Intimate is the link of the present with the past, and rich the bequest of by-gone ages to succeeding times. Sacred, however, is the voice of conscience, and eternal the life-time of truth. Shall India barter away her birth-right of spiritual freedom for the ready pottage of antiquity; or shall she run the prodigal's risk of tearing away from home and dwelling among inhospitable aliens? But to Rammohan Roy's discerning spirit there appeared no such distressing necessity. To the keen gaze of his soul there lay bare, amidst the puzzling heap of national scripture, a fund of eternal truth and inexpressible joy which, sympathetically studied, judiciously adopted, intelligently imparted and reverently received, might form the pabulum—the staple food—for his and many a coming generation of eager seekers after God. In this spirit (as Max Muller has thoughtfully pointed out), not of a prudent adherence to mere antiquity, but of an honest search for, and a grateful appreciation of, the seeds

of imperishable truth, he sought to lay down the Vedanta of the Upanishads, stripped of its strange and disguising coverings, as the basis of the new national life. There he rejoiced to meet the seers of ancient wisdom—types of Emerson's "teachers from within"—proclaiming (to adopt the happy language of the same sage) a God, not of tradition, not of rhetoric, not even of inferential conviction, but of direct sight—a vision and an ecstasy—that circled the world with a halo of celestial glory and transported the soul with the raptures of Heaven. There he was grateful to find a revelation of God's truth that, for loftiness of conception, depth of insight, serenity of contemplation, fervour of devotion, austerity of discipline, perfection of disinterestedness and intensity of beatitude, would ever remain unsurpassed, if at all equalled, in the history of the world. Thus he founded his message on the Upanishads for their intrinsic worth as "the one unsectarian basis and meeting-place"—the suggestive source and the harmonising

synthesis—of the various schools of Indian thought. Among the national scriptures he valued them for their divine authority of eternal truth; among the great “world-books” he welcomed them for their bracing, cheering national air. Thus does the soul retain an open inlet for fresh divine inspiration as well as a healthy susceptibility to the national mode or trend of thought and sentiment; thus are individual conscience and historic continuity harmonised. Free yet authoritative, true yet familiar, lasting yet homely, imperishable yet national, the Upanishads were to him the national (swadesi) type and mould for “Universal Religion.” Thus did he regain a national scripture for the rational soul and furnish to the nation that hope and confidence from the past which is the indispensable precursor to national growth and expansion. Thus was he the first and greatest reviver of the ‘unfalsified,’ ‘undamaged’ Vedanta in the nation, as well as the harbinger of the light of the East to a Western horizon not yet quite clear of the primitive mists of a

detached, heaven-enthroned God and a fallen, eden-banished man.

2. Rammohan Roy, the ardent restorer of the Upanishadic Vedānta as the deepest insight of the Hindu (the Eastern) genius, was likewise the gifted interpreter of the richest expression of the Semitic (the Western) genius—the heart of Jesus. The India of the Rishis, rich and blessed in the wealth of the soul, was, however, not—could not be—the India of Rammohan Roy. Alike external pressure and internal throb were all along modifying and recasting the national ideals and replenishing and redirecting the national energies. As a masterly exposition of this theme by that man of colossal talents and cosmopolitan sympathies—Mr. Ranade—has made it familiar, a momentous change over the entire field of Indian life resulted from the compact of Hindu and Mahammadan civilisations, culminating in that immortal declaration of Guru Nanak that he was neither a Hindu nor a Mahammadan but ‘the equal soul’s brother’ of both in the

worship of that *Nirakar Akalpurush* in whom "Ram and Raheem" passed into one. But Heaven had ordained India to be the spiritual *Prayag* of the world—the sacred spot of the congruent confluence of the mighty world-currents of East and West—of the joy and the strength that come of a lasting, vital harmony of intellect and will, knowledge and power. A vaster and more comprehensive synthesis than had hitherto been realised—had hitherto been, perhaps, possible—had to be attempted : a reverent garnering of "the wisdom of the East and the West," a holy communion of sage and prophet in truth and goodness. In this devout spirit of genuine yet thoughtful enthusiasm Rammohan Roy submitted his "Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness" to the world, as a spiritual and ethical code calculated powerfully to conduce to the elevation of "men's ideas to high and liberal notions of God" and to "the maintenance of the peace and harmony of mankind at large." To bring home to the "business and bosom" of India the serene godliness, the

self-sacrificing love, the ethical vigour and the winning grace of Jesus and thus to enshrine the Heaven-appointed author of the Christian life and civilization of the West in the heart of the nation, was the avowed object of this remarkable publication. The warm controversy it led to was, perhaps, the indirect testimony to its worth and its necessity. Now that with the lapse of nearly three generations all the personal and occasional element in that tough fight for truth has ceased to disturb the vision, the work may justly be valued as the prophetic forecast of that great reconciliation—that organic federation—of East and West through which every faithful and progressive nation will realise the fulness of its potency in a universal humanity. The future of India is rich with a promise almost baffling present estimation, even because it appears to be that eternal capital of the Spirit-empire whither pilgrim souls from all quarters, with their heart-offerings of ideals, aspirations, endeavours and achievements, are drawn as to the shrine immortal

Love and whence will issue forth a Light radiant as the glory of the Lord and a Peace passing all mere human understanding. That this ancient land, thus high-honoured of Heaven, may fulfil this lofty destiny, depends undoubtedly on her readiness to imbibe this catholic—liberal and reverent—spirit of Rammohan Roy—a spirit inspired by the faith, and active in the hope, that it is with the sublime soul-contributions and the loving heart-tributes of all worthy peoples that God will at last make “the pile complete.” This spirit, now fairly familiar, at any rate in theory, it was the unique distinction of Rammohan Roy to have inaugurated; and here is one further proof that he is the builder of the modern Indian nation, the father of New India.

It is very cheering to note that this gradual commingling of the best in the East and in the West for the ultimate perfection of both, aye, of the whole humanity, as being Heaven’s own method, is realised in an increasing degree on all hands. Without subscribing to the sharp distinction drawn

between Indian and Christian Theism as respectively enunciating the Being and the Character of God—for, to my mind, theism (Indian or Christian) to be a religion should be equally related, with necessary limitations, to both aspects of the question—we may all rejoice to note this as the one root-idea beneath Dr. Hall's inspiring lectures. Equally evident is this conception of the correlation of the Veda and the Bible in Dr. Deussen's renowned work on "the Philosophy of the Upanishads." The East and the West are, according to him, complementary as the Intelligence and the Will. The *Upanishads* seek to clear the vision of truth from the mists of ignorance and illusion; the Bible would nerve the volition with the inspiration of love. Prof. Upton puts the same truth in another form (in his *Hibbert Lectures*): that the Aryan religious belief seeks to realise God as the self-manifesting substance of all objective phenomena and the inner, universal unity of all Reason; while the Semitic faith is noteworthy for emphatically recognising the infinite, absolute authority of God as the

sanction for the sense of Duty and Righteousness asserting itself in every individual soul. To all candid minds, the position is now unassailable that for an intense, glowing God-consciousness and a sublime "ethical statement" the Vedantic philosophy is *par excellence*. It should be equally beyond all doubt that for an awe-inspiring sense of God as the author of conscience, and for "lighting up" morality with a cheering emotion and bracing up the will into a "cross-bearing" power, Christianity is "beyond compare." According to the *Vedanta* the story of Life is the sublime Epic of Wisdom of which the Author is the Hero, too; according to the *Bible* the course of Life is the inspiring Drama of Righteousness of which the Author is the Protagonist, too. The *Vedanta* is the cradle of the sage and the seer; the *Bible* is the nursery of the prophet and the martyr.

Nor need this "larger hope" of a brighter and broader day into which East and West shall at last pour their converging lights, be dimmed by the doubt of its denationalising

tendency, of its incompatibility with the manifest variety of human growth. To lower uplifting ideals, to impair inner vitality, to weaken a chaste "passion for the past," is to denationalise; but to swell the stream of life with incoming currents, to drain out its accumulated impurities, and to level down its hindering barriers of prejudice, is truly to renationalise. Nations are shifting survey-marks for a division of labour, not rigid ring-fences of alienated hearts or senseless sheaths of hide-bound souls. They are as the shielding shell that breaks and falls when the life it has nurtured learns to move and fly. With increasing wisdom, the vision takes in a wider horizon; the heart expands with broader sympathies; the soul reveals vaster affinities; the petty rivalries of to-day are merged in the larger fraternities of tomorrow; and we learn, with Zeno, to count men "not as Athenians and Persians, but as joint tenants of a common field to be tilled for the advantage of all and each." The course of human evolution lies between undifferentiated

unity and all-embracing union. To emerge from shapeless agglomeration, to clash in a truceless struggle for existence, to be echeloned into individual development, to race for common prizes, to rally for lucrative commerce, to co-operate in combined philanthropy, to congregate with kindred ideals, to commune in conjoint worship, and thus to find each man's good in all men's brotherhood : so seems to run the gamut of growth—of differentiation, expansion, consolidation and harmony—from disintegration to reintegration. The pilgrimage of humanity is out of the unrealised one into the realised one ; even as its source and substance is the essentially undivided, though phenomenally apportioned, one. Has not he, the oracle of the Over-soul, taught us that “ one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one ” ? This was an intuitive perception of Ram-mohan Roy ; who was, not only (to use Prof. Sir M. Williams's language) “ the first earnest-minded investigator of the science of

comparative religion that the world has produced," but also (as Prof. MaxMuller put it) the first to complete a connected life-current between the East and the West—the inspired engineer in the world of faith that cut the channel of communication, the spiritual Suez, between sea and sea land-locked in the rigid sectarianism of exclusive revelation, and set their separate surges of national life into one mighty world-current of universal humanity.

3. This quickening and harmonising spirit—this passion for spiritual faith and worship, and this trust in the organic unity of truth and humanity—Rammohan Roy sought to embody in the Brahma Samaj, the Indian Monotheistic Church. It would be beside my present purpose to discuss the question as to how far our Samaj has realised the original idea of its gifted founder. That it is yet far—very far—from the goal goes without saying ; but that it has never wholly lost sight of, and still less has consciously given up, that ideal is, I believe, equally plain. Quite imperfect and incorrect, though

very common, is the notion that the Brahma Samaj is a crusade against idolatry and a protest against caste. All reorganisation—all national upheaval—has an inevitable negative side, even as all cultivation involves an amount of weeding and pruning. But the Theistic faith is a positive, constructive agency, advocating and “making for” spiritual worship—individual and congregational—and spiritual freedom through spiritual unity. As the immortal Trust-Deed—itsself a production of a rare religious genius—defined its object, the Brahma Samaj was to be a congregation, a spiritual fraternity of all, without any artificial distinction, for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Author and Preserver of the Universe, limited by no sectarian conception, dimmed by no mask of image or effigy, diverted by no oblation or offering, tainted by no life-destroying sacrifices, tarnished by no sectarian rancour; but fragrant with a sober, orderly, religious and devout spirit, and fruitful in promoting the contemplation of God, the union of man, and

the great virtues of morality and piety, charity and benevolence. Is it too much to say that, bearing any name and adopting any expression, this in spirit and essence is bound to be the only saving faith and strengthening grace of the India that-is-to-be?

The predominant element in this new spirit that Rammohan Roy would infuse into his race, is the spiritual worship of the One Supreme God. Why this land, with a widespread, highly-refined monotheistic ideal, did not adopt an unadulterated monolatrous worship, it is not, perhaps, easy to determine. It may be, as Dr. Deussen suggest, that this sublime idealism was more an 'intuition'—a flash of genius—without the "substruction" of a detailed conception that could vivify, as it would realise itself in, the every-day practice of religion. Or it may be, as Mr. Ameer Ali urges, that this theoretical idealism was realised by the nation, as a whole, only as material pantheism which can easily fraternise with idolatry and is saved from a vulgar fetishism only by its postulate of a unifying whole running through and gathering

up all. To whatever cause this strange—almost singular—state be due, Rammohan Roy laid all the emphasis of his teaching and persuasion on the supreme virtue and inexhaustible efficacy of the spiritual worship of the Eternal Author and Saviour of all as a regenerating, reintegrating power; and only to the extent to which the Brahma Samaj loyally adheres to and works out this central idea of its founder will it reproduce his spirit and fulfil its mission. On this score may there never be a whisper of doubt, a moment of hesitation! May it be the one sacred debt that those who call him master will ever feel they owe to his revered memory, to invite every child of India, in unfailing faith and by inspiring example, to participate in this priceless blessing—this supreme bliss—of worshipping and adoring our Maker and Master, Mentor and Guide, Parent and Saviour, in the direct, unveiled communion of Spirit and in the unflinching service of Truth!

His inborn synthetic temper is inherited by his followers even in this holy office of

adoration. The worship of the Brahma Samaj is a puzzle to those outside it—the thoughtful shake their heads over it, the light-hearted jeer at it. But this “divine service” is the joint gift of the East and the West—of invocation inducing adoration, of meditation mellowed into communion, of praise preluding prayer, of confession consecrated as self-surrender. As for conjoint, congregational worship, beyond the preliminary stage of *bhajan*—of song and dance—it is new again to the spirit of ancient India. Yet what is congregational worship but the profoundest expression of our common humanity in a spiritual fraternity? In conjoint worship man approaches, appreciates and embraces man as a God-illumined soul. Therein soul sits with soul in a sacred ring, soul moves with soul in a holy circle, around the One in whose Light they dwell, by whose Love they live. Therein soul hails and rejoices in soul for the sake of, as dear unto, Him, the Spouse Divine of all human souls. Congregational worship is the *Brindavan* of souls; and in hearty congregational worship lies the ultimate

solution of all human problems. This, as Monier-Williams observes, is “not the least of the benefits effected by Rammohan Roy.”

It may incidentally be mentioned that Rammohan Roy's was an incessantly praying soul. He hallowed his daily ablutions with prayer; he warded off the temptations of a busy world with prayer. The devotion of his heart to its Lord poured itself out in soul-stirring strains; his hours of sickness and sorrow were sanctified with silent communion. Strong with the strength of the Almighty will be Rammohan's church so long, and so far, as it sustains—reproduces and spreads—his spirit of ceaseless, ardent prayer. For through prayer the vows of man are exalted as the purposes of the All-wise, and the resolutions of man are tempered with the will of the Omnipotent.

The other prominent element of the new spirit that Rammohan Roy would pour into the ancient heart of Aryavarta, is the spiritual unity, as realised through the spiritual freedom and the spiritual equality, of

mankind. To him the presence of rich, saving truth in every great dispensation was an axiom; the universality of revelation a verified historical fact; the direct approach of every soul to its Deity an implication, a corollary, of spiritual worship; and the ultimate salvation of all a guarantee of God's immeasurable love and invincible righteousness. How invigorating, liberalising, harmonising and uplifting this new spirit is may be realised through a just and fair estimation of the work and the examples of those that, vivified by the inspiration of the Rajah's life, have reproduced through themselves the part which he played in the building up of the nation. Superior as every great soul is to all creeds and cults, it may yet be asked where, save in a liberal worshipful monotheistic church, could be fostered the spiritual versatility of Keshub Chunder and the "catholic wholeness" of Ranade. Such souls are the credentials of the Brahma Samaj. May it be ever true to, ever worthy of, their spirit! Then alone will the prophecy be fulfilled that the

foundation of the Brahma Samaj by Ram-mohan Roy was "the dawn of the greatest change that has ever passed over the Hindu mind."

4. But few words are needed to sketch the way in which he applied the new spirit to the wants and demands of the age. Here, too, the Rajah's synthetic spirit served to elevate the social sentiment and to enlarge the social outlook of the country. In fact, it is here that his nation-building purpose stands out prominent even to the casual observer. The ethical modes of the East and the West have been distinguished (by Dr. Deussen, for instance) as subjective and objective. Perhaps, this is in keeping with the predominant religious ideal of each. Anyhow, it may be broadly stated that the ethical method of the East is personal discipline, of the West social service; and that the ethical end of the East is self-refinement, of the West social efficiency. Of this comes the old feud between the ways of the individual and the demands of society. But unto the higher harmony of a soul that

beholds in East and West the two wings of the same mansion, may not the true ethical gospel lie in the self-realising fulfilment of the individual through social service and the perfection of society through individual development? Be this as it precisely may, it was through some such method of the co-ordination of individual and social interests that Rajah Rammohan Roy employed the new spirit typified by him in furthering national progress in all directions. How he lived every day of his life for his country and for humanity; how he toiled and spent himself as under his great Master's eye; how he dedicated his talents and resources to the religious, moral, educational, social, political and economical needs of his nation; aye, how his spirit went forth and his arm was stretched out, in sorrowing sympathy or rejoicing fellowship, even beyond the concerns of India—all that is for ever incorporated in the story of the race. Verily, verily Rammohan is the *Bhageerath* of the ever-expanding stream of modern Indian life.

Such, then, realised in my humble soul, expressed in my scanty language, was the spirit of Rajah Rammohan Roy—a comprehensive spirit of faith and freedom, of reverence and investigation, of simplicity and penetrativeness, of devotion and service, of enthusiasm and endurance. Into his soul poured in light and strength from all points of heaven; out of his heart went forth love and sympathy to all quarters of life. To his country he was the bridge between “her unmeasured past and her incalculable future.” To the world at large he is the first arch—the earliest colossus—that spanned the East and the West. He was the morning star, the matin music, of the New Age, in which the many camp-lights will fade in the glory of a peaceful day, and the voices of various hosts will join in a universal hallelujah. The descendant of the Rishis, the disciple of Jesus, the ardent worshipper of the “One only without a second,” the passionate devotee of freedom, the sorrowing friend of the bereaved, the dauntless champion of the oppressed, the merry companion

of children, the sage councillor of statesmen, he was even the prototype of the coming race, where man's soul shall be the mirrored miniature of the world. Drawing his spiritual nurture from the great world-repositories of faith and hope, and realising in himself the abiding affinities of all revelations of God, his soul was one of the springs—the far-off sources—of that international spiritual federation, that distant divine event of universal humanity, to which the whole creation moves. If, according to Max-Muller, the greatest discovery of even a century renowned for its revolutionising discoveries, is that the original God-consciousness of the Hindu, Greek, Roman and Teuton was radically one, Rammohan Roy was an accredited pioneer of that sovereign discovery. Aye, he was likewise the herald that proclaimed that, philology apart, “Jove and Jehovah” are counterparts, supplementing and fulfilling each other, the God of consciousness and conscience, of reason and righteousness, being ultimately One. The Dream of Akbar was the Vision of Rammohan Roy. It was

his epoch-making genius that sketched the plan and laid the foundation of that world-wide Temple that would be

“ Neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,
But loftier, simpler always open-doored
To every breath of heaven ; and Truth and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein.”

II

RELIGION AND RECREATION.

(1895.)

Abstract philosophy and inspiring religion differ as culture and conduct; the former touches only the upper zones of thought, while the latter weaves itself into every concern of life. Acute reasoning, whether it grapple with the subtlest problems of life, or thread its way through the intricacies of puzzling casuistry, or hold the balance between the rival claims of conflicting duties, is an intellectual exercise which may nerve the sinews of thought or clear the perception of the mind. But faith—the meeting of the ascending soul of man with the descending spirit of God—is an additional faculty, a new spirit that makes its holy influence felt upon every activity of life, a fresh leaven that works as a refining and ennobling agency in the whole human existence. Thus viewed, philosophy is, at best, but an ideal plan rarely

consulted in the actual structure of life, while religion is its main-stay and cornerstone.

But not a few of those who admit this high office of religion more or less narrow its scope by placing certain engagements of life outside its pale. The distinction between what is meet for the religious and what is suited to the secular aspects of life is world-old and world-wide ; and even where the all-embracing demands of religion are not received with a sneering shrug, it is often required as a necessity of life that piety should not be exacting in her rule but modestly set a limit to the measure of her interference. That religion is the highest concern of life is readily admitted ; but, apparently on that very account, a doubt is raised whether certain channels in which human energies daily flow do not pass through a soil too profane to receive the sacred waters of devotion. Some ordinary duties of man are believed to be so deeply enveloped by the dust of the world that the pure light of Heaven will, it is feared, be tarnished in its glory by seeking

to shine through them. Hence some of the commonest concerns of life are withdrawn from the realm of faith and are settled in a province of their own; where society and not God, taste and not conscience, is the supreme legislator. Nowhere else, perhaps, is this tendency to provide an exception to the undivided sway of religion better illustrated than in the almost universal consent with which amusements and recreations are placed outside the reach of faith. Without being condemned as positively irreligious, they are very generally supposed to be so little compatible with a religious spirit that, excepting a few select souls, the world is unable to see how *Æsop* can unbend himself and yet pretend at the same time to be a sage. Seriousness, often verging upon gloominess is to the average mind a main feature of piety; and amusement of any kind, as being the very opposite of seriousness, is supposed to be, at best, but a graceful concession made by religion to the lower instincts of man.

But, if closely considered, religion will appear not only to be unopposed to recreations

but directly to demand and encourage them. Healthy amusements and recreations, as dictated by a great law of nature, are an essential requisite of our physical and social existence; and they come with all the force of a duty to those who honour their bodies as the sanctuaries of the spirit and esteem society as an expression of peace and goodwill among men. Nay, they are a testimony to the goodness of God, whose loving hand introduces so many pleasures into the cup of life. Rightly regarded, games, sports, amusements, recreations—in fact, all pastimes—are gifts of God—the generous provisions of a Loving Wisdom to lessen the burdens, to multiply the energies, and resuscitate the nobler activities, of life—refreshing halts in the march of existence—genial diversions that make the journey all the more agreeable. All such exercises are useful accessories to the true objects of life and, hence, welcome auxiliaries to genuine religion. But human faith, while lending its ardent support to everything which is in accordance with a beneficent law of nature and which serves to illustrate

the goodness of God, sternly sets its countenance against whatever disobeys that law or is antagonistic to that goodness. Stated in general terms, religion consists far less in what we do than in how—in what spirit—we do a thing, as faith, rightly understood, is more in the *being* than in the *doing*. Accordingly, the attitude of religion to the pleasures of life is one of a censor or supervisor who places the sentinels of conscience, truthfulness, purity and generosity at the portals of pleasure, admitting and encouraging those amusements and recreations which are calculated to relieve the fatigues of life, to refresh the spirit of activity, to soften the hardness of conventionality, to foster a feeling of union, and to promote a desire for brotherly sympathy; while vetoing or keeping out those which make “too large inroads on our time, our fortune, our health, our character, or our duty,” or which “raise and warm the passions.” Pleasures are meant to be the links between the serious engagements of life—the hand-maids to the noble purposes of our existence. To proscribe them

altogether is to repeat the mistake of the ancient puritans who, in seeking to make man serious, gave him a sour temper and, in trying to keep out ribaldry, chased away sociality. On the other hand, to withdraw the watch of religion over the arena of amusements is to elevate passions and sensations, competition and rivalry, into a law and a dictator unto themselves; resulting probably in life becoming a Lord Mayor's Day, and languor and gala-making the ebbs and flows of existence. But when the element of religion is fused into our pleasures, our very mirth will be a testimony to God's goodness, our most trivial engagements a fulfilment of His purpose. Our pastimes will tell the tale of His compassionate providence; our amusements will be loving duties, discharged under His eye. "White" lies and petty jealousies, thoughtless excesses and wasteful excitements, garish shows and giddy vanities, debasing indulgences and immodest entertainments, will be happily superseded by strict probity and spotless purity, fair-minded equity and genial toleration, wise

abstinence and subdued feelings, humane desires and judicious relaxations. Life will prove a sphere of happy yet holy engagements, moving from duty to duty and joy to joy, revolving around one central Love and making with kindred orbs the music of universal progress. Thus Religion will be "humanised" and Recreation will be "transfigured," and man's existence will be the sacred symphony of duty in happiness and happiness in duty.

III

WHAT THE BRAHMOS INCULCATE:

(1885.)

Early in its history, the Brahma Samaj of India issued two publications which had for their motto the following golden lines (in Sanskrit):—

“ This wide universe is the sacred temple of
God.

The mind is the purest pilgrimage; Truth
is the imperishable Scripture.

Faith is the root of Religion, and Love is
the great realisation thereof.

The destruction of selfishness is asceticism.
By the Brahmos these things are inculcated.”

Now, let me say a few words about each of the expressions, so intensely pregnant as it is with matter of high importance. To me there seem to be three ideas involved in the first expression; namely, that God is everywhere revealed by nature, that He can and

ought to be worshipped without any distinction of locality and that purity must always be part and parcel of man's own self. That nature everywhere bears a deep impress of the attributes and doings of God is an undeniable truth to him who really sees and feels. "His eye is everywhere, His face is everywhere, His hand is everywhere, and His foot is everywhere"—such is the omnipresence of God seen and felt by the pious Rishi; and the modern philosopher and scientist sings the same hosanna when he names the mysterious universe around us "the grand Epic written by the finger of God." Wherever we turn, we can clearly see behind the thin screen of nature a blazing Light—an all-comprehensive Intelligence and an unending Love. For him who *can* see, there is "splendour in grass" and glory in the blossom, an unspeakable beauty in "the meanest flower that blows," a record of the Creator's love in every leaf of the foliage of the groves. It is God that the heart-melting melody of the philomel and the incense-breathing murmurs of the morning breeze

reveal ; it is Him that the rippling brook and
 the fertile meadow proclaim ; Him the vernal
 wood and the beautiful birds of the forest
 glorify ; Him the Sun and the Moon daily
 announce with their rise and descent. He is
 " every day manifested with the rays of
 morning," say the Vedas ; and the Bible and
 the Koran join in chorus with them, when
 the one says that " the Heavens declare the
 glory of God " and the other holds that " all
 in the heavens and the earth praiseth God."
 In fine, as Carlyle says, " this world is still
 a miracle, wonderful, inscrutable, *magical*
 and more, to whosoever will *think* of it," and
 very unthinking and unfeeling must, indeed,
 be the head and the heart to which every
 flower does not speak, with all the authority
 of a Mosaic rod, of the beauty and grandeur
 of its Creator ; to which every field and
 hedge-row is not girdled with a halo of
 sanctity and effulgence far intenser than
 that of the " burning bush ", to which every
 object in nature does not at some time or
 other stand as the priest and proclaimer of
 the immediate presence of an All-wise and

All-loving Deity. Well, if nature is the oracle where you can clearly hear the voice of God, quite naturally must it be His temple also. In my humble opinion, there should never be any distinction made as to the locality where alone God must be worshipped, or (at least) worshipped specially. Wherever the body be, if the soul can freely wing its way to the throne of God, that place is as good as any other for worship. It is said of Nanak that, when asked by a Muhammadan how he would consistently be a religionist if he turned his feet towards Mecca, the house of God, the sage replied, "If you can, turn them towards any spot where the awful house of God is *not*." Well, if the wide world be the sacred temple of God, it is deducing but a logical truth when I say that man must everywhere and always be what the whole universe at the very top of its voice ever proclaims God to be—namely, holy. If we always are within the temple of a holy God, is it not desecrating that temple, is it not dishonouring the Deity within it, if any vicious act be

committed, if any sinful thought be tolerated, if any impure word be uttered, within the precincts of that holy place? It has long been my humble opinion that one of the countless evils of which idolatry is the fertile source is the localisation of morality. The eye, getting the supremacy of other faculties, compels the idolator to associate the idea of divinity with, and localise it in, the temple or the corresponding place in his house; and as a natural consequence, the idea of necessary morality and purity is localised in that temple or sacred place. To be pure in the presence of his idol is all that the idolator's conscience generally demands; and if any higher and purer notion ever enters his mind, it is because consciously or otherwise the man for the time thinks of the Omnipresent, All-holy God. Whatever quibbling theory may hold, such I feel sure is the actual experience of every unbiassed observer. We, who have, by God's grace, revolted from idolatry, still have, I feel sorry to say, many a passion and prejudice deified and idolised in our heart; but until we

become thorough iconoclasts and throw away all idols—whether material or immaterial—and turn to the one imperishable Truth which is God Himself, purity is an impossibility and virtue an airy phantom. And unless and until we are pure and virtuous, unless and until the whole world is our worshipping-place, let us never forget that we are desecrating a holy shrine; that we are shamelessly ungrateful to an All-Merciful Father; that we are kissing and embracing a monster; that we are living a life of death. Therefore, let me entreat all, with all the earnestness I can command, to see and feel and touch the one true God everywhere, to worship Him everywhere, to imitate and be like Him in holiness at all times and in all places.

Now, let us turn to the second expression in our text—"the mind is the purest pilgrimage." To me, the mind is a clearer manifestation than aught else of the Divine Author of all; the mind bears a deeper stamp and impress of the nature of God than any other thing whatever. On earth there is

nothing great but man, in man there is nothing great but mind. "That supreme internal witness of men" (as, Manu calls it), "that vital spark of heavenly flame" that mysterious principle in us—the Soul, how eloquently does it speak of its God! The deep emotions, which elevate a man above the shackles of time and space; which turn a hell into the veriest heaven; which bind heart to heart and bridge over the chasm created by caste, creed, colour, country, or condition—the all-scanning reason and the all-spanning imagination—the fairy fancy which in a trice crosses oceans and traverses mountains, glances from heaven to earth and back again—that sweet remembrancer, memory, which by keeping a record of the past supports a man in sorrow and curbs him in his prosperous precipitancy—the rainbow arch of hope, the sovereign remedy of the wounded and the sweet solace of the poor and the oppressed—who can ignore these and forget their awe-inspiring Creator? What is there in the whole universe—nay, what things put together are

there—which can show the shadow of an equality to a noble soul, to a truth-loving mind, to a philanthropic heart? But for a Buddha and a Christ, a Sankara and a Chaitanya, would not the world have been of the beasts and bestial—a charnel-house and a dungeon? Unless we see an All-powerful Will, which blows worlds into and out of existence as if they were so many bubbles, behind and beneath our wavering will; unless we see a deep, lasting and fathomless Love, which feeds the ant in its hole and the lion in his den, behind our fickle and raging love—; unless we clearly discern an infinite Understanding, which spans the past and scans the future, behind and beneath our weak and erring intelligence; we have not understood ourselves, we are no men. But when once we have really grasped and understood the questions, “What is that mysterious principle called Soul?”, “Whence is it?”, “Whom does it reveal?”, “Whose Shekinah is it?”, we possess a knowledge which neither sages nor the high-priest of nature can teach us. It is by having a knowledge

of the soul, by knowing its "whence" and its "whither," by purifying and enlightening it, by concentrating it upon and devoting it to God, by climbing from a knowledge of the soul to that of the soul's Soul—it is by this process that man at last becomes the "paragon of animals," the "lord of nature," the true son and revealer of his Father and his God. This is a very difficult process demanding the utmost taxation of all our energy, of all our faculties; but the result is equally important, raising the man from a brute to a mortal God.

Next, let me turn to the expression—"Truth is the imperishable Scripture." This, in my humble opinion, seems to be *veto* against that ridiculous process of backing and bearing out a truth—a message direct from the throne of God—with the questionable credentials of a so-called revealed book, an inspired prophet, or a miraculous phenomenon. Pure gold needs no polish, and real truth wants not the support of a bruised reed. As has been well said, to him who knows and practises truth, all revealed

books and all commentaries thereon are but as a well in a country inundated with fresh water. Truth has the seal and stamp of omnipotence itself and will fight its way into every corner of the world, quite unaided by the trumpet-sound of a revelation of prophets and miracles. Truth is like the light from the heavens above, and he who has eyes to see will see it, whether you loudly advertise it or not. If there is one ground on which a religious book can commend itself to my acceptance and challenge my admiration, it is that it brings saving truth to me. If a religious book stands the crucial test of my reason and conscience and satisfies them; let heaven and earth enter into an unholy compact and cry *nay*, I will boldly say *aye* and accept that book. *Per contra*, truce to all your deluding jargon about tons of miracles, prophecies and revelations, if you thereby want to establish that what my reason and conscience call blackness is really whiteness. In fact, it is worse than absurd to establish the imperishable and the unquestionable—as Truth must always be—by the unavailing

help of perishable, incredible and questionable miracles, prophecies and revelations. To try to convince me of what I can and ought to know by what it is impossible and needless for me to know, is (I beg pardon for saying so) more absurd than the inimitable logic of old Smith, who wants to convince Stafford that Jack Cade must be the true heir-apparent because he "made a chimney in my father's house." If an assertion or a book is speaking the truth, why, then it will prosper without the gewgaw glitter of external and questionable authority; and if it does not speak the truth, you may as well force it upon my acceptance as you may make the bee sip poison from a flower-cup. The only consideration that ought to have any credit in forming an estimation of any scripture or religious book, is whether it contains the truth. If it does, then all miracles and prophecies are useless—more a clog than an engine. But if the book has no pretensions to speaking the real truth, despair, you foolish man, despair, of ever palming it off on the world as being true and respectable. The world is instinctively

against you ; no glare and glitter of all your miracles and prophecies will dim its vision. Truth is the only scripture, truth is God Himself, truth is mighty and will triumph of itself. ‘Revelation’ is no necessity ; ‘miracles’ are an impossibility ; and prophecies an ambiguity : and truth will triumph in spite of them, quite unaided by them. In proportion as a book contains truth it is a scripture ; and in proportion as a book is void of truth, it is trash and clap-trap. My friends, always regard truth as your only scripture, let truth alone be your *Veda* ; for in revelation and miracle there is no salvation. Run not after incredible airy phantoms ; always take your stand upon the rock of truth ; and although you may be puny, He with whom truth will associate you will support you against all the waves and torrents of opposition.

Now let us turn to the next expression—
 “Faith is the root of Religion.” Boldly as we always fight for the claims of reason and conscience, let it be clearly understood that we, Brahmos, are no rationalists—pure and

simple. Belief has ample room in our creed. But what do we mean by belief? It is not that faculty which makes a man go against the warning voice of reason and conscience, taking him into so many absurdities and eventually making him forfeit his reason—at least, in religion. Belief, we hold, is not against, but beyond, reason. Belief is the “substance of things hoped for”; is the source of the knowledge derived, not directly from reason and evidence, but by instinctive hope based upon reason and evidence. Belief is evolved from, but soars beyond, reason and evidence. If we knew nothing, there could be no belief; for belief is evolved out of evidence and if we knew everything, belief would be unnecessary. Belief is the off-spring of reason and evidence; but the vigorous child is ever in advance of the slow parent. Ignoring the single point of their independent origin, the eye and the telescope clearly indicate the relation between reason or evidence and belief. If there were no eye, no telescope would have been thought of; if the eye could see

everything, no telescope would be necessary. About the reports and deliverances of belief, reason or evidence has no *may* or *aye*; for what belief knows reason cannot of itself know much of—at least, certainly. But if there be a point where reason and so-called belief dispute the palm, the former must always carry the day. Viewed in this light, the infinite space and the eternal time of the philosopher, the atom and the molecule of the scientist, are, in my humble opinion, objects of pure belief and faith. And when, with the light and guidance of this faith or belief, man rises above the finite and immediate causes and soars to the One Infinite and Final Cause of all, he takes his ‘initiation’ in religion. When, arraying his reason against all the objects of the world and finding all fleeting, man, by the aid of faith, throws off the veil of nature and finds out the One Eternal Cause of all, then and then only does he, for the first time, cross the threshold of the all-holy temple of religion. Thus Faith is the root of Religion. Firm, unbending faith in this that there is one Eternal,

Intelligent First Cause of all is the root of all true Religion.

But what shall I say, what can I say, of the expression—"Love is the great realisation of Religion?" Ah! how sweet—how inestimably sweet—is the expression 'Love'! What talismanic effect has that small word upon every feeling heart! Love! How potent a combining element it is, binding soul to soul and object to object, welding all the universe into a homogeneous whole! Love is the theme of the whole world. Love is creation's first and final law. Love is the centre and the circumference, the be-all and the end-all, of everything. Love is the first and the last commandment of our creed. It is in love that God creates the universe, it is in love that He protects it, it is in love that He destroys all our sins. It is love that creates society; it is love that evolves from the bosom of man all those noble qualities which make life a pleasure and the world a paradise fairer than the fabled Eden. Love is the realisation of Religion! And Religion is the essence of

everything that is good and true and useful. What is the realisation of Religion? Salvation; which consists in a cultured head, a pure heart, impartial justice, and full liberty attendant upon resignation to the All-merciful. Salvation means knowledge and enlightenment for the intellect; purity of emotions, the seat of which is popularly said to be the heart; impartial justice for conscience; and full liberty for the will attainable only by the thorough dependence of the weak human will upon the all-powerful divine Will. Now, let us see how Love can be the realisation of Religion. If I am to love my God and my fellow-creatures, it is always indispensable that I should clearly know who and what they are. Love for them necessitates that I should have a deep knowledge of God and His creatures. If I love God, it is more than understood that I know full well that He is infinite as space and eternal as time, that He knows all and sees all and especially loves all endlessly. And if I love my fellow-creatures, it is clear therefrom that I know, to some extent at least, their merits and

demerits, their relation to God, to others and to themselves. For how can I love those of whom I know nothing at all? Hence love is the cause of our intellect acquiring knowledge and enlightenment. Again, with the increase of knowledge there naturally springs deeper and deeper love and admiration for God and for His creatures. Love necessarily flows free towards those objects whose real state we know well. The more we learn about God, the more do we love and admire and revere Him; and the more we revere and love the Creator, the more do we love the created; for

“ He prayeth best who loveth best,
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.”

Every one knows the world-wide tale about Abou Ben Adhem—how he showed himself to be a real lover of man and how an angel from God assured him that he headed the list of all the lovers of God. In fact, we may rest assured that wherever there is real genuine love for God, there cannot but be deep love

for all His creatures; and that he who disinterestedly and with a pure motive loves every object around him consciously or otherwise loves the Creator, Father and Sustainer of that object. It is this deep love for God and all His creatures that makes a man complete. Be he never so great and large and broad, let his intellect be incommensurable, his other faculties equally brilliant, unless and until he has deep, firm and enduring love for God and for His creatures, that man is after all a glaring type of badness. It is this deep love for God and for His creatures that brings into play all the latent capabilities and attributes of a great man. Disinterested hospitality like that of a tree which does not withhold its fruit even from the wood-cutter—the sincere charity of a true philanthropist who gives alms in secret and blushes to see them famed, who spreads peace and plenty wherever he goes but accounts it no obligation on others, who writes the gospel of love with his hands and feet in helping the widow and the orphan and in visiting the poor and the

sick—endless sympathy and forgiveness, those great extinguishers of the fire of violence the value of which, as a Persian poet says, “excels a hundred holy temples of Mecca,” which make a man return good for evil and compel him not to enter Heaven but in the company of his enemy and injurer—that all-melting kindness which, as Sadi says, makes “every thorn which people sow in thy road bloom in the lustre of thy smiles”—that untiring patience, “the first of virtues,” as the Kural calls it, which enables us “to bear with those who revile us, even as the earth bears with those who dig it”—and a whole host of other equally noble qualities and capabilities are all brought out in full force and energy by a deep and enduring love for God and His creatures. It is this love for God that enables the pious martyr to laugh to scorn the tyrant’s ire, to smile on the scaffold, to court an honourable death, and to seal the doctrine of truth with his life-blood. And it is this love for his fellow-creatures that emboldens the true hero to seek the huts of misery and the scenes of

pestilence as the field of his glory and victory. Love is the season and salt of everything; it endears home, sweetens society, creates patriotism and true hero-like courage, inspires love for all, and fills one with deep admiration and reverence for God. Love is the source and spring of all Duty; and Duty is the basis of all Gospels and the substance of all Religion. To love God with all our strength, mind and heart; and always to do unto all others more than what we would that they should do unto us—this is the sum-total of all virtue and all piety. Stamp this simple but precious truth upon your heart; and rest assured you will make a Man. The third thing included in that sweetest of all words—Salvation, is an uninjured conscience. A sound conscience is the greatest boon that Heaven confers upon man. It is at once the rudder and the compass, the pole-star and the power-house, of all good and true and noble thoughts and actions. Make a load-star of your conscience; let it guide you; and you will steer clear of all treacherous shoals and rocks. On the other hand, woe unto him

whose conscience is consciously injured ! Ah ! it haunts him wherever he goes. Like a dreadful demogorgon, it pursues him at all times and in all places, deprives him of peace by day and rest by night, and leaves him at last a fool and a wretch—at once an object of pity and a victim of scorn. A good conscience is a great necessity amongst us. Its absence is the cause of all the lethargy and all the moral weakness, of all the shamelessness riding rampant in our society. Giving our thoughts and actions all the roseate hues than the flattering hand of a perverted reason and a selfish fancy can colour them with in exposing the weaknesses of others in all their naked deformity, hiding the faults we have, and twisting into strange and unseemly things even the excellences of others, we are every hour and minute stifling our conscience.

Dear brethren, let us pray from the very bottom of our hearts for the bestowal of a good, sound conscience. Let us try and let us try, let us slacken no attempt until we obtain what we so sorely lack, until we are

placed in a position to see and to image to ourselves everything both within and without us, as if in a plain mirror. And this sound conscience is obtainable only by one means; and that is the cultivation of deep, true, earnest love for God and man; for unless you have deep love, selfishness will sometime or other lead you to injustice; but when you once have deep and firm love, you will be equally unwilling to be prejudiced for or against any one. Then, the last thing equally important as the previous ones is liberty of will, consequent upon a firm, unswerving reliance upon the All-merciful Will. Will is the spur to action, and action is the index to the real, true man. Will is the moving power in us; and it is simply ruin and perdition to shackle it, to deny it its liberty. I need not say much upon that the right use of which is the main line of demarcation between men and brutes. Suffice it to say that to curb the freedom of action is real suicide, more direful than death itself. But let it be well understood that liberty is not libertinism, that liberty and reverence for our superiors.

are quite compatible, and that in the name of liberty we ought never to degenerate into what is but hidden slavery. If our will is to be free, it must always be unsullied by any prejudices and passions. It must have no bias, it must be courageous and iron-like, and, above all, it must renounce itself with full trust to God and to what He likes. I feel sure—nay, I will stake my life in upholding the doctrine—that he who is not firmly, unswervingly, reliant upon a benign Providence will never know what freedom and strength of will is. Deep trust in God, unhesitating submission to His Will whenever it is made known to us, unquestioning faith in triumph of truth—these are the sole conditions of freedom and strength of will. But what is the nature of this trust? Generally it is said to be the trust of the child in the parent.

“Fear not the windy tempests wild,
 Thy bark they shall not wreck ;
 Lie down and sleep, O helpless child ;
 Thy Father is on the deck.”

Although there is much truth in this, yet, in my humble opinion, it does not represent the whole truth. The trust must not only be that of a child, but more—the trust of a wife. Not only should our soul be child-like but also woman or wife-like, before it can enter Paradise. The trust of the child arises from diffidence; but the trust of the wife springs from unwillingness to act independently. The child trusts the father because it cannot help doing so; the wife trusts the husband because she delights to do so. The child is an independent personality; but the true wife merges herself into, and becomes one with, the husband. The child separates himself when full-fledged; but the true wife would rather die than be alone—away from her lord.

“ I'll be there,—
 In death's cold wedlock by Thy side;
 Oh! I would ask no happier bed
 Than the chill waves my Love lies under;
 Sweeter to rest together dead,
 Far sweeter, than to live asunder.”

Wife-like trust is the key-stone, as it were, to all freedom and strength of will. And this trust is possible only when we have deep, unchanging love for God, only when we see in Him the *beau ideal* of all goodness and the fountain-head of all true love. Thus Love is the root of all Salvation, and Salvation is the realisation of Religion.

Next, let us turn to the last expression in our text—"the destruction of selfishness is true asceticism." If love is the spring of all goodness, selfishness is the root of all evil. Love raises everything above self; but selfishness postpones everything to self. Love reduces self to a mere speck; selfishness gives it the importance of a whole world. Selfishness always dreams of wants, wants are spurs to desires, desires ripen into passions, passions are the fruitful source of all evil. There is no evil but arises out of selfishness. Root that out, and you are a true ascetic. Weed out selfishness, and your character will be noble. But is not all the selfishness in the world mean and blind? Caught in the fangs of an adder, the poor frog in those last moments

tries to catch the stray fly that flies across its mouth. We wise men gravely philosophise over it and condemn the frog as foolish. But our 'wiser' senses do not open our eyes to the fact that, ever caught in the clutches of grim death, we are wasting all our energy in a foolish flight after the misty meteors of the world, coolly passing by those things which concern us for ever. What are we in this world? An atom? A sand-grain? No, not even that. And how long is our stay in this world? Not even a single moment, when compared with the endless time before us. And all this din and clash about this airy nothing! Can anything be blinder and meaner? Can anything be more ridiculous? Neglect not this world; but adore it not. It is the school of love, the first step into eternity; and here let us not play the dog in the manger. Selfishness obscures the vision, twists the truth and, like the puny palm placed in contact with the eye, hides everything except "I" and "Mine." Let us root out this upas-tree, let us view everything in love; and we will be true ascetics. If you have eradicated

selfishness, asceticism is of no use ; and if you have not, the very desert becomes a scene of crime. And the best way to overcome and root out this evil of evils is, not by shirking difficulties—as asceticism would have us do—but by meeting them and tiding over them, always guiding ourselves by the pole-star of love and truth. A deep knowledge of these facts—that man is all-ignorant, all-insignificant and all-transient—is the sovereign remedy for this, the universal pestilence of our age. Humility—the destruction of selfishness—is the one thing needed before we can learn anything, before we can in any way approach to true manhood. In humility there is no humiliation. Humility is true nobility. Take this immortal advice given by Kapila to Kaundilya, the warrior, and learn that “the destruction of selfishness is true ascetism.” “He who has controlled his own spirit and desires, who has knowledge, piety and a good character, gathers the fruits of a pilgrimage. Even in the sacred forest inflamed passions cause crime ; and in the mansion, self-control brings purity to

dwell. The virtuous man's home is his desert of devotion. Those whose food is only to sustain life, whose voice is only to speak truth, make hardships easy. Thyself art the sacred river—its waters are truth, its banks right conduct, its waves benevolence. Here wash thy lips; for the interior soul is not purified by holy water," nor by rites and penances, nor by injuring and neglecting the body. Destroy selfishness, build up your character, and you are a true devotee.

Such are some of the truths taught by Brahmaism. There is perhaps nothing new in them, when generally surveyed. But the characteristic of Brahmaism is that it is pre-eminently a progressive religion. And when it sees even old truths in a new light and pushes them to the utmost limit that the knowledge of the modern man can permit him to do, even those old truths must appear as new lights. Owning no other revelation of God but the ample page of nature without and the living testimony of the soul within; taking its stand upon nothing but truth—the one reliable scripture—Brahmaism begins in

faith and, striking hard at the root of selfishness, at last flows into the fathomless ocean of love, "If I were to describe Brahmaism in one word," says Babu Raj Narain Bose, "it would be the word 'love'." It is by this principle of love that Brahmaism has become thoroughly spiritual, has thrown away not only all idols but all book-revelations and all mediations. It is owing to this principle of deep love that Brahmaism sweeps away the notions of material Hell and Heaven and almost impatiently curses the very ideas of eternal hell and vicarious atonement. It is by this principle of deep love that Brahmaism accepts truth from all quarters and shares the beatitudes of Heaven with all men in this world. It is by this principle of deep love that Brahmaism announces eventual peace and joy to the most refractory child of God. And it is by this principle of deep love that Brahmaism regards this world, not as a place brimful of sin and temptation whence man should fly to the refuge of asceticism, but as the veriest Eden planted by the All-merciful Himself for our happiness and

enlightenment. My dear brethren, hold fast by this religion whose very core and essence is love. In it you will find the one oasis of richness in the wilderness of contending religions and clashing faiths. In it you will find a vantage-ground whence you may see and hear heavenly sights and seraphic sounds which should personally be felt to be apprehended when described. In it you will find that great desideratum of our age and of all ages—an omni-tolerent, all-loving Religion. In its Divine Master you will find a Preacher, Teacher and Leader who, as a pillar of heavenly fire and a pillar of soothing and cooling cloud, will lead all from the Egypt of superstition, prejudice and intolerance to the Palestine of virtue, peace and piety, where everything will be found overflowing with the milk and honey of love and liberty. May the All-merciful Father of all lead His children from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to life eternal!

IV -

WORSHIP:

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

(1891.)

There has been, of late, much writing and speaking about the necessity of idol-worship for man as a preliminary stage in the progress of religion. The *Brahmavadin* had an elaborately written article on this subject; and the *Awakened India* reported a sermon preached by Sri Sankarachariar in favour of it. These, no doubt, contain no new argument, suggest no "original" justification for the ancient and wide-spread institution of Idolatry, and only repeat the old and staple excuse alleged to be based on the supposed incapacity of people in general to understand the nature of God. As humble advocates of the possibility of spiritual worship for every person that, to any degree, aspires to a religious life, and of the sole efficacy of such worship, we think it our supreme duty

to express our sincere view of the subject of the plea for idolatry. It may be that we ourselves shall say nothing new; which will be due, we think, to our limited spiritual growth as well as to the nature of the argument we are called upon to meet and answer. We do not quite know what our orthodox Hindu brethren mean exactly by worship. But from what we have been able to understand of it, we are led to think that our good brethren begin at the further and (for purposes of true religion) wrong end of the matter, and thus obtain an altogether distorted view of the subject. When they speak of God as an Almighty Power which pervades the material universe, they put, unawares it may be, in a nut-shell, as it were, the basis and the nature, as well as the innate flaw and inefficiency, of the worship which they aspire to offer to God. They try to conceive God as an Almighty Power pervading the material universe—an all-bending force (it *may* be called will) *without* and *around* man—a sweeping, bounding main that swells and surges around the tiny islet of human being, now

rushing on in threatening billows whose might none may withstand but anon receding, as if before a magician's wand, in humbled and scarce perceptible ebbs. Their idea of the Deity is that of an impelling force or a sustaining power which propels the course of planets and evolves the growth of mountains, which reveals itself in lightning and announces itself in thunder, which rushes down in torrents and rolls forth in floods. Hence He is to them a "distant" God that now advances only to awe and again retreats to disenchant the eye. Circumscribed by the magic circle of His own infinity to which none of finite nature can venture approach; elevated to the insurmountable heights of His own majesty, God is to them necessarily the "abstract," the intangible, the unrealisable—something (as they themselves confess) with which man cannot aspire to any *direct, conscious* relationship. Thus banished to the outskirts of His own creation, the Deity is, as a matter of course, difficult to be "pictured," unless the thought is stretched out and the intellect is strained forth by laborious study

and induction (*Vedic* or any other,) to be a bridge (alas ! how very shaky after all !) over the wide gulf that seems to yawn between Him and man. God is to them the final *wherefore* of almost innumerable *whys* ; and it is no wonder that few can wend their way through the various *whys* and fewer still are destined to reach the distant *wherefore*. It is but a daring and fortunate Theseus that threads the labyrinth ; while they of the weaker heart shall, perforce, be satisfied with a "representation"—a mere report, an empty hearsay, a rarified, imperceptible mist of an idea which must be "condensed" to be felt. Subtle logic thins away the Deity into the remote regions of space, and the world *within* is left an empty abyss to be peopled by the creations of imagination—of gods "figured" forth by a wild craving fancy. And this deplorable feature expresses itself in worship and in life—in speech without an inspiring *emotion* and in action without a divine *principle*—in "concrete" worship (if that sacred word may be thus misused) with its idols and incarnations and its pomps and processions,

and in "copied" morality that is guided not by the inspiration of God but by the rulings of "sages." Thus religion is reduced to a mechanism that, as Emerson has well said, "moves through a zodiac of feasts and fasts"; and morality degenerates into the abstinence that fear dictates, or the compliance that prudence suggests. Thus prayer is propitiation and conventionality—the propitiation of an awful and all-compelling Power and the conventional acquiescence in what the "elders" have said and prescribed. And thus religiousness and not religion, and "good-breeding" but not character, are the ambition of man. Such is, then, the natural but degenerating transition from God only in the external world to a distant God, and an unknown God, which, as it were, by a retreating process, leads to an "imagined" God and to an "imaged" God.

But Theism, with its spiritual worship, begins at the other end—at the very spring and fount of religion is the symphony that is *struck* in the human heart and *echoed* through the material universe. With them God is the

Sun of Righteousness that *shines* through the soul and is *reflected* in external nature. To them the Deity is *primarily* not the Almighty Power which pervades the material universe, but the Light that illuminates the head, the Love that quickens the heart, the Guidance that directs the conscience, the Holiness that sanctifies the soul. As Miss Cobbe has well observed, the first "article" in the Theistic "Creed" is, "I believe in 'God' the Holy Ghost." God is a besetting, an immanent, an "inmate," a regent and an inspiring Deity. He makes His shrine in the soul of His worshipper; His "holy of holies" is the heart of His devotee. The world *without* is but the outlying province of the world *within*: the material universe is only the suburb of the Celestial City of the Spirit. The law of gravitation that links orb to orb is but the 'physical' *illustration* of the law of love that knits the human to the divine soul; the "commandments" of the Lord on the tablets of the heart supply the "key" to His hieroglyphics in the strata of the Earth. The Inspirer reveals the Maker; the Father-

explains the Creator. According to this view, God is not a sweeping power, a distant ruler, an unconcerned law-giver, but is near and dear, a present Deity, an indwelling Mentor, an 'interested' Father, an ever-sustaining Mother. He is not the stoic holiness that no prayer can 'move,' or the inapproachable majesty that no sinner can 'invoke,' but the 'exorable' Inspirer that whispers His wisdom into the heart of the supplicant, the loving Saviour that reclaims the erring into the paths of His grace. He has a *direct* personal relationship with *every one* of His children; and in His boundless house of many mansions, every soul that He creates has a seat. Thus worship is not the "propitiation" of an Almighty Power, not the "bending" of a compelling Force or an iron Will, not the "homage" of fear to the supremacy of an inexorable law, not the "submission" of prudence to a benevolent tendency, not the "contract" of virtue with a compensating principle, not the passive contemplation of a self-magnified ideal, not the unaided human effort towards absorption

into a silent, impersonal divinity that weaves and works itself out into nature. It is, on the other hand, direct, conscious communion between two Beings—the sympathy of thought, the harmony of affection, the unity of design, the confluence of will and the bond of holiness between the Deity and His devotee. Worship is the throb of love, the looking-up in admiration, and the vow of devotion of the human soul for its Divine “Spouse.” It is the devout supplication that the purposes of Omniscience may be revealed to the eye of faith, and that the will of the worshipper may be broken-in to the ways of the Lord. It denotes the *‘felt contact’* of man with his God, and marks the process by which the Son willingly merges into the Father. It is the feeble, altogether inadequate expression of a divine idea that absorbs the soul and a celestial emotion that enraptures the heart. It is the sacred halo that betokens a transfigured soul; it is the sweet perfume that bespeaks a regenerated heart.

This view of worship necessarily *presupposes* that God and man have found each

other out. It requires, not only for its efficacy but for its very possibility, the *antecedent* of man's direct and personal knowledge of God. Worship, according to this theory, is the aspiration that follows the inspiration of God, the admiration that comes of perception, the union that is begotten of 'sympathy,' the devotion that is induced by love. Its foundations are laid upon man's inner growth and conscious approach towards God ; its secret spring is in the similarity of the Son and the Father ; its very starting idea is the upheaval of the soul with a divine influence. Worship, then, is intelligent adoration of the Deity, personal attachment to the Lord, direct communion with the Inspirer, and willing self-dedication to the All-holy.

Hence, the worship of a God not understood personally by the devotee is to us a spiritual enigma. Pygmalion's love for the statue appears to be reason itself as compared with this strange phenomenon. It is something that surpasses our humble capabilities to understand how unrevealed wisdom induces admiration or how unfelt love inspires

devotion. To our simple minds the beauty that is screened by the veil of ignorance creates no joy, and the music that is hushed by the silence of deafness excites no emotion. In fact, to us the assertion that the idolators worship God through the representation of idols which, as being parts of the universe, are pervaded by Him, always sounds as a dilemma or "a begging of the question." We fail to see the consistency of the logic that denies to the worshipper all knowledge of God and yet invests him with the capacity to understand His "representation." The intelligibility of the "representation" depends *exclusively* upon a knowledge of the "original;" and the "representation" of an unknown object must *necessarily* be understood. It demands a larger fund of imagination than we can pretend to possess, to grasp the paradox that He, whom "winged words" pregnant with the very essence of thought cannot adequately describe even to those that have entered the *sanctum* of His glory, is "pictured" and "formulated" by mute wood and silent stone to those that have

never touched even the hem of His garment. It is a psychological puzzle that we cannot solve how the Almighty Power whose presence in the material universe, with its teeming marvels—the theme of the poet, the research of the scientist, the delight of the philosopher, and the wonder of all—is a sealed book to the followers of the “concrete” worship, makes itself patent unto their dull and untrained eyes in idols and pictures with their seeming life and superfluous organs. Take him that ‘binds the sheaf’ or ‘builds the house,’ speak to him of the glories of creation, God’s “magic wonder,” the fairy tales which every science has been telling; ask him what he thinks of a Deity from whom, in whom, and unto whom he is; and, like the little negro-girl, Topsy, he will say, “I’ spects, I growed.” But place before him man-made images, not uncommonly of a mixed and often of hideous appearance and almost never of quite unimpeachable associations—images which are the exact antithesis of what we believe of God as one that sees without eyes and hears without ears; take him

through a series of unintelligible observances and genuflections; and lo and behold, he bursts out in hallelujahs of praise and prayer to the “Almighty Father” whose “universal fame” all things constitute. Such is the philosophy of idolatry. It may, indeed, be very sound. But we beg to plead our inability to understand it. For the present we feel sure that the eye never sees what it does not bring with itself the power to see; that he to whom the indwelling God is invisible, will never be blessed with a sight of Him in the outer world; that he who hopes to worship the Deity through idols prefers an imposing “Barmecide feast” to substantial and nourishing food.

We may well decline to notice the dangerous—nay, positively unwise—principle of conduct that the right way in which the wise and the good will serve the ignorant and the erring is, not to help them up to their own elevated position, but to conform conventionally to the ‘low’ ways of the latter. The end of all *Sastric* lore is barely to understand the spiritual, but really to practise the

material, worship of God; for, the real purpose of worship as performed by a "sage" is, not to express his sense of reverence and gratitude towards the benign Father and to pave the way to his own spiritual progress—when the true method of worship would be indispensable—, but to afford an example of conduct to "the ignorant people." Hence, a "sage" would be guilty of the breach of a solemn duty, if he should fail to worship idols. Verily the sheep lead the shepherds of orthodoxy!

There is no superstition but subtlety may defend as a potent means of moral safety to society; and idolatry is no exception to the rule. But, unless grapes are gathered from thorns, idolatry will never promote—nay, it can never even understand—the transcendental morality which wells up from a conscious allegiance to the wisdom of God and willing and cheerful subservience to His benevolent purposes. The ethics of idolatry, like the 'worship whence they spring' will necessarily flow in a material channel. The goad of fear or the bait of self-interest

will be the 'ruling passion' of an idolator, in general; while, for him who enjoys the privilege of personally approaching and adoring the Deity as a Spirit in spirit, the glory of his God will be the load-star of his duty, and morality will be the fruit and fulfilment, in peace and good-will on earth, of that Divine Love which is the sole law in "the Kingdom of God."

V

"A NATIVE THINKER" *

ON IDOLATRY.

(1891)

Even good Homers sometimes nod ; and in these days, when it is the rule or fashion to defend the indefensible, to justify the unjustifiable, to force or infuse an esoteric meaning even into nursery tales, to read philosophy into the veriest absurdities and most indecent and immoral customs or institutions, it is no wonder that even the rarest thinkers should occasionally lose the balance of their minds. Readers of Macaulay will clearly remember the striking comparison he draws between the genii in the Arabian tale and Johnson's gigantic mind, how, at one time, free from all prepossession, it would overshadow both earth and sea, but, at another, under the potent seal and spell of a cherished idea, wring and dwarf itself into a narrow vessel. Still, it may well

* Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao.

remain a psychological puzzle how the great Cham of Literature, who require more reason than the world could afford for the universal belief in immortality, would yet run and watch for the Cocklane ghost; or how the shrewd thinker who cannot believe that the golden patins in the firmament twinkle on human destinies, or, that there is a "divine thrusting on" from the countless orbs above upon the ideas and inclinations of man, will yet find moral and religious virtue in molten and graven images.

We would be false to our principles and mission, should we slight or speak contemptuously of what our brethren set up as an object of worship; for, firm as is our humble allegiance to our Lord, we should be wanting in that love of which He is the prime source, if we do not respect the convictions of a brother-man. Nothing is so far from our heart as a desire wantonly to wound the feelings of those that differ from us; but a call to duty must always be obeyed. When into the old bottle of superstition is poured the new wine of philosophy, who can help

observing that it will not hold? When an attempt is made to strengthen the gettering fetters which centuries of selfishness and tyranny—of internal social conflict and external political oppression—have forged, but, which, thanked be the All-Merciful, are being gradually filed away by culture and freedom, what lover of Liberty, what votary of Truth, can help discrediting the effort? When what has been ‘a direful spring of woes un-numbered’ to India is at this time applauded as the most fruitful source of countless blessings to this hapless land, ‘breathes there the man with soul so dead’ to patriotism as not to cry truce to such pretensions? Let justice be always done though the heavens should fall. To cry down an evil custom but, all the more, to love the unfortunately erring brother is at least our motto and ideal.”

We have but little to do with the few remarks offered to “Mr. Huxley and his school”. But we must emphatically protest against the purely utilitarian view taken of Religion. ‘A native thinker’ tells

“ Mr. Huxley and his school ” that, in this great gaol of a universe where all are rogues and criminals, religion is a lofty central tower from which the superintendant is supposed to watch over the conduct of the culprits—a supposition which keeps them on their best behaviour and trains them to habits of good conduct. God forbid that such views should prevail ! This is nothing short of strengthening the hands of the ‘ free-thinker ’ and the ‘ secularist ’ by upholding their well-known opinion that religion is a delusion which, however beneficent in a primeval epoch of the world’s history, must be early superseded by the era of positive knowledge and that morality is a mere conventionality imposed by a sense of fear or utility. Religion, however, is a solid fact—an eternal reality—a rock against which the billows of atheism beat in vain—a sun that survives a million passing clouds of unbelief. Religion is life to the religious and proof against the assaults of logic. It is not a humble supplicant but a bold claimant for appreciation. It puts forth, not a petition to be suffered to live

and to serve, but a mighty right to exist and to govern. For the true believer religion grows with the increase of knowledge and the advance of time, and morality is the natural outcome and expression of religion. The filial and fraternal phases of the same human nature instinctively reveal themselves in religion and morality. Virtue is its own reward; and faith is contemporaneous with feeling and thought—with poetry and meditation—with the stars within and the stars overhead. They are not a sweet coating to a bitter pill, or a charming mirage to tantalise a thirsty traveller, but are the very mainstays of human soul and society and the most potent sources in the evolution of history.

The sheet-anchor of 'A native thinker's' argument for idolatry is the staple reasoning that man must rise from the concrete to the abstract. Withdrawing for the present the question whether an Omnipresent Author is a title less concrete than one of the most insignificant words in the grand epic which His finger has written, we may admit the

proposition. We may allow that several examples of concrete force must be contemplated before a universal and all-pervading force is conceived, and that the action of a magnet upon a needle must be seen before the grand law of gravitation is understood, or that, before a chalk line on a black-board is seen, one cannot understand a line without breadth. Whatever peculiar shape and turn may be given to the argument, the general principle underlying all the particular examples is that the study of a familiar thing forms a stepping-stone to the comprehension of an object similar, but less patent, because on a higher plan. In other words, we must rise "through Nature up to Nature's God." We must study and emulate all that is good and noble in the 'Vicar of the Almighty Lord.' But we utterly fail to see how all this goes to justify idol-worship. It simply establishes the ancient but vital truth that a father's care, a mother's love, a friend's loyalty, a son's obedience, a wife's trust, a patriot's enthusiasm, a martyr's self-immolation—in fact, everything that is true, pure and

lovely in the universe is a mirror, however dim, to God's glorious attributes; and that the study and experience of these attributes, of these noble features in nature, are the catering of the bridge between God and man—between light and darkness. The world is a suburb—an outstation—of the City of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." One and all of the objects in Nature, from the tiniest to the most majestic, sing, "The Hand that made us is Divine." It is these foot-prints of the Deity on creation that guide the pilgrim to the Celestial City. They are the altar-stairs that slope from earth to heaven; and along them man ascends to the footstool of God. Such is the ascent from the concrete to the abstract—or, rather, from the effects to the prime cause. But how bathing and dressing an image, or feeding and lulling to sleep an object that needs no eating and knows no waking, can generate and develop those spiritual faculties whose exercise is called religion, we can never understand. If the Divine Creator of the

universe is to be studied through His works, the only volume open to man is the triple revelation of external nature, history and the human soul. To read in a block of wood or a piece of stone all those divine attributes which are said to be too lofty for human conception requires by far a larger amount of emotion, imagination and meditation than is involved in the natural process of rising to a conception of the Deity from an observation of the beauty, wisdom and goodness that He manifests in every object of nature. "Every leaf in the green foliage of trees is a record of God's wisdom." "Not only does every philomel tell the beads of His praise, but also every thorn is a tapering finger to point out the glory of God." "I leave it," says that far-famed champion of religious and social reform, Mr. K. Veeresalingam Pantulu of Rajahmundry, "to the wise men here to state whether it is not decidedly much easier to instil into a man the pure and noble attributes of God by showing and explaining those eternal witnesses of His glory—the unquenchable effulgence of the

sun and the moon, the varied beauty of trees and plants, the myriads of stars which, pendant like mercury balls of diverse hues and radiance, feast the eye for ever, all bearing undying testimony, by day and by night, on the earth below, in the heavens above, in all countries, to the noble qualities of the Almighty Creator and Governor—than it is to ask a man to imagine God's attributes in lifeless, motionless images of stone." It is idle to talk of the images as the symbols or the allegorical representations of God's attributes; for a symbol or an allegory is utterly meaningless without an antecedent knowledge of the original, and no symbol is entitled to worship—to transcendental admiration and absolute renunciation. Again, an allegory is an allegator. It devours whatever it reaches. It is ingeniously applied to mere things than one; and it has already accommodated indecency, immorality, and even blasphemy. Nor is the plea that a Deity not materialised by idols cannot be understood by the people anything but a reflection upon the intellectual and spiritual

capacities of the Hindu nation. The greatest man of Modern India—that intellectual and moral Samson amidst grovelling philistines—that immortal patriot and reformer from whom takes its spring every beneficent activity of our days—Rajah Rammohan Roy justly observes, “ The attainment of perfect knowledge of the nature of the God-head is certainly difficult or rather impossible ; but to read the existence of the Almighty Being in his works of nature is not, I will dare to say, so difficult to the mind of a man possessed of common sense and unfettered by prejudice, as to concieve artificial images to be possessed at once of the opposite natures of the human and divine beings, which idolators constantly ascribe to their idols, strongly believing that things so *constructed* can be converted by ceremonies into *constructors* of the universe.” “ Permit me, in this instance, to ask whether every Musalman in Turkey and Arabia from the highest to the lowest, every Protestant Christian at least of Europe, and many followers of Kabir and Nanak, do worship God without the assistance

of consecrated objects. If so, how can we suppose that the human race is not capable of adoring the Supreme Being without the puerile practice of having recourse to visible objects?" The advocates of image-worship must, says Rajah Rammohan Roy, "either immediately give up all pretensions to understanding or forsake idolatry."

'A native thinker' is a thorough utilitarian philosopher. He wants some religion only in the interests of the community. He applauds the consummate wisdom of the Hindu system of marriage as conducive to the greatest pleasure of the larger number of human beings. He defends idolatry for so much "practical good" it has produced. What damned error but some sober brow will bless and approve it with a text? There is no cucumber but some keen-eyed philosopher may extract sun rays from it. There is no custom but some ingenious thinker may manage to distil practical good out of it. We are, however, so utterly sceptical as to the utility of idolatry that we would count it a favour if any one pointed out to us a single

real good that the unhappy country owes to the gigantic system of image-worship. That system is, in our humble opinion, at the root of every evil—political, social or moral—that has ever smitten India. It has been the veriest Pandora-box unto our unfortunate fatherland. By corrupting and materialising men's views of religion, by narrowing the love that true belief always tends to beget and propagate, by confining religious ideas to the sacred surroundings of a shrine, by setting up one sect against another, by reducing faith—soul-stirring faith—and regenerating worship into rites and formalities, idolatry has supped upon the very vitalities of the Hindu nation. It has transferred religion from the true love, pure worship and loyal service of the Supreme Being to the hollow externalities of clothing, dressing, adorning, feasting, bedding, marrying, nay, even pimping and pandering to, an idol. God is represented to the masses, says Rai Bahadur Sisir Chunder Dutt, by the *Murti* which is regarded as the ladder by which to rise by degrees

to the light of lights. Unfortunately, the ladder is a descending and not an ascending scale. Dissipation and excess do not restore people to vigour and health, nor idolatry and its accompaniments to God and true religion. And the descent in India has been so rapid that among the present objects of worship are counted stocks and stones as the *Saligram*; implements of trade as the plough and the awl; animals as the jackal and the dog; birds as the goose and the owl; trees as the *Tulsi* and the *Neem*; and rivers as the Ganges and the Cauvery.

“ There are not only gods many but almost everything is a god ”. “ The effects of idolatry on the nation have been very injurious. Says the *Gita*, “ He who worships matter becomes matter ” or a blockhead ; and the Hindu mind has certainly been stupefied and paralysed to that extent.” But the tale of woes does not end there. Idolatry is a “ Dead Sea apple,” a “ Barmecide feast.” It is all a deluding show without a solid core or substance. It begins and ends in ceremonies and sacrifices. “ To please the idols,” says

Mr. Veeresalingam Pāntulu, “some brand their shoulders, some pierce their tongues and arms, some hook their backs and swing, some mortify their bodies by fasts, some sacrifice fowl, sheep and even buffaloes to their stone-gods and, but for the authoritative prevention of the Government, some would, with hearts as hard as the stone-images they worship, be ready, not only to sacrifice their fellow-men and their own begotten children to the idols, but also determine to commit suicide by falling beneath the car of the stump-armed Jagannadhaswami.” What more inhuman actions can man do? Is not this conversion of the human to the demoniac nature due to the influence of idolatry? And as the deity, so the devotee. Man is moulded by his ideals. If they are low, gloomy and cruel, he cannot be noble, cheerful and generous. “Idolatry as now practised by our countrymen,” says Rajah Rammohan Roy, “and which the learned Brahmin so zealously supports as conducive to morality, is not only rejected by *Sastras* universally, but must also be looked upon with great horror by

common sense, as leading directly to immorality and destructive of social comfort. For every Hindu who devotes himself to that absurd worship constructs for that purpose a couple of male and female idols, sometimes indecent in form, as representative of his favourite deities. He is taught and enjoined from his infancy to contemplate and repeat the histories of these as well as of their fellow-deities, though the actions ascribed to them be only a continued series of debauchery, sensuality, falsehood, ingratitude, breach of trust and treachery to friends. There can be but one opinion respecting the moral conduct of a person who has been brought up with sentiments of reverence to such beings, who refreshes his memory relative to them almost every day, and who has been persuaded to believe that a repetition of the holy name of one of these deities or a trifling present to his image or to his devotee is sufficient not only to purify and free him from all crimes whatever, but to procure his future beatitude.”

“I can be at no loss to give numberless instances where the ceremonies that have been

instituted under the pretext of honouring the All-perfect Author of nature are of a tendency utterly subversive of every moral principle." And in confirmation of the most damaging charges he brings against this most injurious system of worship, the talented Rajah quotes scores of passages from Sanskrit literature, which neither our own inclination nor the respect due to the feelings of our readers will permit us to reproduce. It will be enough if we put down a few bare words which, like a witch's cauldron, conjure up a weird host of monstrous horrible associations enough to chill and freeze a man's blood—*Devadasis*, *Jalakreedas*, *Saktaism*, *Vallabhaism*, *Kanchukotsavam* etc. Is not all this 'practical good'?

We have no desire to go into the whole question. Our sole aim has been calmly to examine the arguments advanced by "a native thinker" in justification of idolatry; and we find that, like all attempts to vindicate what is intrinsically wrong, his reason breaks down completely. As a stepping-stone to spiritual worship, idolatry is not only

a failure but a real impediment. As a help to weak minds, it is absolutely useless. As a moral agent, it is one of the most injurious plans that human head has ever devised. It has split and weakened, stultified and demoralised the nation. Instead of the bread of living and ennobling faith, it has given the race the hard stone of ceremonies and sacrifices. In the place of the grapes and figs of a spiritual religion and an elevating morality, it has grown the thorns and thistles of superstition and conventionality. The wheat of true belief has been stunted and overgrown by the tares and weeds of meaningless rites and revolting observances. The soul is killed, and the flesh rules. The spirit has passed away, and they are embracing the corpse.

It is an unfortunate mistake to suppose that the upholders of a pure spiritual worship aspire to revolutionise the whole world of superstition and idolatry in a day. They are fully aware of the fact that it takes perhaps a year to undo the mischief of a day. They know quite well that it will

require many a generation before India purges and unscales her long-abused sight and kindles her undazzled eye at the full beam of noon. Their only demand is that the evil inherent in the present system be felt and acknowledged, and honest, persistent efforts made to cleanse the 'Ægean stable' of Hindu Society. Long has *Aryavārtha* been groping in the Egyptian darkness of idolatry; and it is high time that a number of earnest servants of God rose up to mark with their own life-blood the lintel and door-posts of their fatherland, that this spiritual curse and pestilence might pass away from her, and to lead the nation through the appalling wilderness of spiritual struggle and regeneration to that distant promised land of God, overflowing with the milk and honey of spirituality and fraternity.

"The dearest idol I have known,
 Whatever that idol be,
 Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
 And worship only Thee."

VI
THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS
&
REPENTANCE :
Presidential Speeches,
BRAHMOTSAV PUBLIC MEETING.
(1916)

HYMN—*Bharatha Bhagya Vidhatha* (Bengali.)

OPENING PRAYER.

Glory, glory, glory unto Thee, Thou *Bharatha Bhagya Vidhatha* ! Thou, that ordainest the destiny ; Thou, that prescribest the course ; Thou, that vouchsafest Thy richest blessings unto our Land, our ever-beloved Bharathavarsha ! Glory, glory, glory unto Thee ! Rich with the wealth Thou vouchsafest now in natural abundance, now in mental talent, now again in moral fervour and once again in heights of spiritual inspiration, Thou hast made this Land again and again the repository of Thy wisdom and the fountain-head of Thy grace. Blessed,

blessed, blessed be Thy name! We thank Thee for all the æons past, for all the ages to come. We bless Thee for the awakened sense of truth and righteousness, of renewed life of vigour and usefulness, of the rehabilitated supremacy of Conscience and God-Consciousness—for all these we render our thanks unto Thee. Glory, glory, glory unto Thy name! Do Thou lead us by thy Light; do Thou inspire us with Thy Truth; do Thou preside over us and enrich us with Thy grace on this occasion. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name for ever and ever!

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE HARMONY OF
RELIGIONS.

My dear friends, a better, a happier introductory speech it would be impossible to make than that inspired song with which the proceedings have begun. We believe, as I think, rightly believe, that in no country as in India is every stream and every mountain, every grove and every grotto, associated, consecrated, with the name of piety, of devotion. And it is in this Land, we believe, more than

in any other, there has been a ceaseless hierarchy of sages and prophets who have time and again awakened the dormant senses of man to his birth-right, his God-given heritage, to be recognised and blessed as the son of God. And it is in this Land, through the unmistakable ordinance of Providence, there has been an unparalleled confluence of races and faiths—that conviction to which Ranade, after Rammohan Roy perhaps the most comprehensive representative of New India, gave expression half-a-generation ago and which has been echoed feebly or proclaimed enthusiastically by various humble or privileged advocates of Truth again and again. That Truth has once more been enunciated by the Honorable Dr. Nilratan Sircar in his able Presidential Address at the last All-India Theistic Conference—namely, that India is destined to be the custodian of the World-Religions. If only we briefly survey the religious situation and the moral condition of the country, we see that in no land under the sun is there this wonderful

juxta-position, not merely as a sort of tolerant or even benevolent neighbourly adjustment, but an ever-quickenning contact and intercourse; the co-existence of representatives of every creed, of every school of thought, of every system of faith. Here in India, as in no other country, every Dispensation of the Spirit that has spread over a considerable area and held its position for a definite period of time, I say, every system of historical importance has its representative. Here in India, again, it is that different types of civilisation have spread and, inspired by these, diverse beliefs have also sought to strike root. In this country, not as a philosophic explanation but as an unavoidable, imperative necessity for the healthy existence of the nation—here, I say, more than in any other country—this question has to be faced and solved, namely, how these faiths, so vitalising in capacity, so historic in content, are to be so harmonised, so welded together, so reinterpreted and so reconciled as, consistently with all other programmes of progress, to form the

religious inspiration, the moral uplift, the social fulcrum, the political sustenance, of this land and, through the example of this land, of other lands likewise. This is the question that has to be faced ; and every faith, through its best exponents, has to grapple with this problem and find a solution therefor. It cannot be—it is impossible—that in India a reconstruction of national life can ever take place without the direct and immediate inspiring influence of religion. It is an untenable view to take that a reconstruction of Indian life can be accomplished without reference to religion. Religion has played a most important part in shaping the destinies of nations, in most other countries generally and in this land particularly. Not merely the compelled toleration which comes of unmanageably extreme circumstances but a sympathetic co-operation, a hearty commingling of energies, a free confluence of ideas and a conjoint effort at vitalised and invigorating existence ! It is necessary that these faiths should be made to harmonise.

that a new spirit of sympathy and catholic assimilation of truth, goodness and righteousness, as modelled and symbolised by these various faiths, should be the guiding principle and the animating ideal of all the leading men of the nation. Therefore, we all educated men, with educated men's duties and rights, are called upon to ponder the obligation, and address ourselves to the responsibility, of justifying India as the custodian of the religious faiths of the world.

If there is anything like an intercourse, a co-operation and a corporate union between the several faiths, wherein lies the secret of their sameness? On what basic principle are all alike founded, what are the common ideals which animate and uplift them? These are the problems that have to be carefully pondered. Is it or is it not a fact that the Spirit of God, with paternal care, has been hovering over animated creation? Is it or is it not a fact that the Light of God, universal in self-bestowal like the light of the sun, has been shedding itself in incessant and abundant fertilising results upon all faithful,

loyal hearts, all devout, reverent souls? Is it or is it not a fact that they who have from time to time spoken, as the world believes, with an authority not of this world, the saving truth and the glowing word of more than morality, of more than emotion, which so nerves the will and so quickens the conscience that truth becomes not merely the most powerful but the only sovereign concern of life—is it or is it not a fact that those who have spoken with the foresight of inspired prophets, with the zeal of devout disciples, are the messengers, the gospel-bringers, of the One True God? Is it or is it not a fact that, apart from the co-operation of race and nations—or, rather, as the necessary preliminary pre-requisite application thereof,—there has been also an advancing, gradually approximating ideal common and therefore natural and welcome to all races as they have met in India? Is it or is it not a fact that, after the early days of mutual distrust and therefore of unhappy misrepresentation, the prophets of different nations have realised a sacred fraternity, a holy community unto

which stands revealed the same truth, though passing through the different prisms of diverse tradition and tendency? Is it or is it not a fact that the several scriptures and sacred repositories of wisdom of all ages are but successive chapters in the Eternal Gospel of which God himself is the author and interpreter? This is what I would pray every educated friend to direct his best attention to. And then it will become plain wherein and how, as the opening song has said, God himself is the pronouncer of that supreme blessing. India is under his benediction, because in India, as the chosen and finished jewel of God, through the different facets are revealed and brought into prominence the diverse rays of faith that have been evolving the destinies of the world. Here it is, as the song goes, that the Hindu and the Mussalman, the Parsee and the Christian, the Jain and the Buddhist, the Sikh and every other sectary, have found not merely a forced toleration but a neighbourly co-operation. Here it is that the gospels of different peoples-

have been commanding—at any rate, demanding—the attention and the allegiance due to them—a phenomenon the like of which is not witnessed in any other country. Here it is, therefore, that the problem of the Universal in Man has to be faced and solved.

The end of all religion is to exalt into, and to explain by, the Universal the characteristic faiths and beliefs of the individual. Hence, without losing the healthy land-marks in the movements of every faith, we are to make the many particular aspirations merge into the one universal aspiration—the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man and the Kinship of Creation. And as we solve the problem of the ‘How’ of this phenomenon, the conviction will be verified and the gospel will be justified that India is the custodian of the religious destiny of this world. It is with this object that we, each in his humble way, have been struggling to realise the faith that is vouchsafed unto us.

CLOSING REMARKS ON REPENTANCE.

Repentance is true effective purification. That we can never profess to be purified

unless we have repented is a truth verified in the experience of us all. Far be it from any struggling sinner, and from me more than anyone else, to speak lightly of the means, some crude and some out of date, that the panting, struggling soul adopts in its endeavours to rise out of the slough. But the fact remains—it is an open admission of universal consensus—that till repentance has purified the sinner, till the mirk and dirt of iniquity has passed through the fire of sorrow, pain, tribulation and contrition, there can be no real emancipation for the soul.

As a supplement to what has been so eloquently and inspiringly stated by my esteemed brother*, I wish to dwell on *one* point. It is an undoubted fact that till a man repents, he is not changed, he is not regenerated. But what makes one repent? The usual, ready answer given is, ‘It is one’s sin. He has sinned; he is feeling his sin, the burden of his sin, the smart of his sin; and it is this that makes him repent.’ That

(* Mr. Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham.)

is the common answer. I submit that (so far as my poor, humble experience goes) after all, when the consciousness of my sin troubles me, I often console myself with the idea that I am not worse than my neighbour there, and if he is hale and happy in his sin, I can take consolation unto myself. What makes me writhe is not the consciousness of my sin but the consciousness that, in spite of sin, I am dear to God. God yet loves me in spite of my sin ! And hence, and only hence, my spirit writhes, not in the hope that it shall be purified, but with the sense of that ingratitude which has inflicted a wound in the heart of the Divine Mother. Friends, if I may so, with the privilege of one who has tasted the fruits of sin, realise *that*. Madam Guyon, the French mystic, has said,

“ I have no punishment to fear ;
 But Ah ! that smile from Thee,
 Imparts a pang, far more severe
 Than woe itself would be.”

The smile on the countenance of the Divine Mother, the beaming face that is not averted

from the sinner even though the sinner turn away from the Mother—that is the secret spring, that is the irresistible power, which compels repentance in us. Those of us who have studied the life of St. Augustine will remember how he was a prodigal in early life; and his mother used to kneel on Sundays at the altar of the Church and pray that her son might be saved; but the young man, he would not care for the feelings of the mother; he was absolutely callous and indifferent to the smarting, writhing parent to whom he was the object of incessant prayer. At church, one-day, the pastor beheld that, when all others had left, she knelt down on the hard stone and, with flowing eyes and heaving breast, prayed her son might be saved; and he said to her, “Go thy way, woman, the son of so many tears cannot be lost.” And as this was reported to young Augustine, he said, “Does my mother *yet* love me? Then I *cannot* sin.” So, rotten though to the core, palsied and completely contaminated with sin, yet, in the pure arms of the Divine

Mother we are held dear. That brings out, not the calculating desire that I may get out of sin, but the yearning desire to embrace Her and say, 'pardon'—oh! impertinence to ask for pardon!—but the contrition which says, 'Do I deserve pardon? Mother, dost Thou yet love me? Can even Thy infinite grace take away the iniquity of this revolt?' Thus, thus it is that all teachers have said, 'Pardon is Divine Grace.' It is not merited; it is not supplicated; but the Divine Mother, out of pure grace and abundant benevolence, says, 'No pardon, child. Pardon presupposes offence; pardon presupposes anger; pardon presupposes alienation. The Mother is never alienated; the Mother is never angered; the Mother is never offended, Thou, my child, hast never need of pardon!'

And what is it that nevertheless holds us back from the Divine Mother? It is the ignorance of this fact—that, though ever so rebellious, ever so ungrateful, ever so unworthy, the Divine Mother holds *us* dear; and paradoxical as it may seem, unjust as it may appear, in the economy of the Divine Mother,

the greater the sin, the dearer the child ; the stronger the invitation, the more torturing the consciousness that all that abundant, inexhaustible love has been so bestially ignored. My friends, the smelting in the furnace, the opening of new gates, the revival of the dormant spirit—this is not in one's own hands, no, not in the frail agency of despicable mortals. It is wholly and entirely the grace of the All-merciful even through the irresistible impulse, the insatiable desire, of at-one-ment. I do not repent that I may get better. I repent that I have hurt the heart of the Divine Mother. Brothers and sisters, pardon the presumption, but it is a sinner that speaks from the depths of painful experience and in the hope that the expression of this sinner's little experience may be of use to others better situated in life. God's best blessings be with you !

VII
YOGA.
(1908)

My remarks will be largely, almost exclusively, based on the work which is the distilled spirit of the inspired life of Keshub Chunder Sen—his work on *Yoga: Subjective and Objective*, which is the mirror of his life; the remarkable gospel, the sublime expression, of a God-intoxicated soul.

Yoga is the distinguishing characteristic of the Indian sage, not prominently expressed by Western thinkers, though, in the mystic writings of a few, there are here and there cadences of it. In India, it is accepted as the Realisation of Religion, the Fulfilment of Salvation. It means, in English vocabulary, communion. It begins in attachment, it leads up to communion, it merges in inter-communion. It loses or realises itself in absorption. The immersion, the absorption, of the devotee in the Ocean of the All-pervading God is the

characteristic of Yogic rapture. This Yoga is characteristic of every true seer. There is a historic counterpart to this in the religious literature of our country. Yoga is of three kinds :—

Vedic Yoga ;
 Vedantic Yoga ;
 Puranic Yoga.

The Vedic Yogi realises God as the All-pervading Force present with all His sustaining strength in each and every molecule. He sees God in the majestic mountain, the threatening main, the rolling thunder, the radiant orb, magnified through the telescope of Vedic culture. To him the ear is a channel of communion with God. To him there is no touch but is a living thrill. To him the delights of taste are but the messages of His presence. It is not in the secluded chamber but in the broad world that he can commune with God. He goes out into the heart of the forest and there realises God as weaving Himself out in every leaf and blade. He thus confirms the Persian poet's insight that ' unto

the truly piercing eye every leaf on every tree is a gospel of the glory and mystery of God.' He sees God even in the casual occurrences of nature—even in them a purpose, a deep-laid design. Each and everything is to him a gospel of God ; a grand epic of, and a living witness to, God's glory and greatness. He is ever in contact with God. God is to him a vital Force, a sublime Vision, a vivifying Person. Rain comes to him not merely as a compound of hydrogen and oxygen but as a gospel that God is a living, active Being, a never-failing Fountain of good to man. It thunders not but shows His might. It rains not but showers His bounty. It flows not but as a crystal of God's purpose. The world is to him a Crystal Palace where he sees God everywhere. He views naught but sees God's grace in it. This is Vedic Yoga.

In Vedantic Yoga, the *Rishi* is no longer the observing witness but the musing meditator, no longer depending upon the physical senses. He beholds the Power dawning in the child, awakening in the youth, maturing

in the adult, mellowing in the old. He asks, 'Whence does this activity spring up? Where is the inner spring?' He asks, 'What were this world without me?', not in the atheistic sense that the whole world depends upon him alone but in the sense that he is a mirror of God, that the picture of the world is cast upon him by God, that in him there is a living witness unto God. To him intelligence is the reflected thought of God; conscience is the authoritative voice of God; and emotion is the overflowing ecstasy of God. God to him is more revealed in the soul within than in the world without. For, as Dr. Martineau has said, the telescope can reveal fresh constellations of stars; but where is that telescope, made of physical material, that can reveal the colours of virtue? Unto him every twitch of the muscle is an enrapturing thrill of the soul; and every thrill is an immediate manifestation of the Deity in the soul. Absorption, silence, meditation, complete self-effacement, self-forgetfulness—that is the characteristic of the Vedantic Yogi. To him trouble is peace,

bloodshed is humanity, because there is a self-satisfying bounty in him against which the world does not count. The world by him is not discarded ; it is transfigured into an occasion for the soul to realise its oneness with the Divine. He is a miniature copy, but, all the same, a true sample, of God, an image of God upon earth. With him pride is but self-respect ; madness is but rapture ; other-worldliness is mere constancy of conscience ; nay, all evil is but good in the making ; and the sinner of to-day is but the saint of tomorrow. Law is but the will of God. Chance is but the unexpected providence of God. Human society is but the knitting together of God's children under His own supervision. Truth is universal because it is God's truth. Revelation is valid in so far as it is proved by the touchstone of the soul.

To the Puranic Yogi, God, without in the world and within in the soul, is directly and personally active in human history. To him God is the Arbiter of human destinies, the Guide of human aspirations, the Judge

of human actions and the Fulfiller of every thing worthy in the world. In the destinies of the world God is the prime, pre-eminent Factor. To him the world is an epic of God ; history is the drama whereof God is the hero ; and the soul is the lyric of which God is the subject-matter. Struggles consecrated to God's purpose are the stepping-stones of the spirit to higher things. For, as Keshub has said, there is a blind impulse, there is an intense desire, there is a keen purpose, there is a conscious demand, and out of all these comes the fulfilling man. Humanity is Divinity brought into practical history, its evolutions and even its revolutions. Yes ; even so. For, did not Carlyle declare that, if the French Revolution had not happened when it did happen, possibly his faith in God would have been shaken ? As for Great Men, they are but the mountain-peaks built upon the lower strata of ordinary folk. No commander, however brave and strong, can win the battle but through the co-operation of the private soldier. Similar is the case as between the leaders and the masses.

Thus we have the sacred Trinity of the Incoming, the Pervading and the Returning God, who is the Father in Nature, the Holy Ghost in the Soul and the Son in History.

SERVICES
AND
SERMONS.

I
BRAHMOTSAV SERVICE
with Sermon on
THE SPOUSE DIVINE.
(1911)

UDBODHANA.

Praise and glory, thanks and salutations, be to the Supreme Lord and Master! Blessed be His name at whose suggestion, by whose inspiration, for whose adoration, we are met now and here on this auspicious occasion! He is the Author of our being; He is the Source and Spring of Life within us and Life around us. He is the Light that shineth through a myriad orbs across illimitable space. He is the Love that permeates and sustains these countless beings, these numberless souls. He is the Supreme One, passing human imagination, glorious with a resplendence which the eye cannot stand, loving with a sweetness which the heart cannot conceive, holy with a righteousness

before which the yearning, aspiring soul can but prostrate itself in silent awe and amazement. He is the Perfect God who claims and shall receive the whole-hearted adoration of every one of us. We are here to bow down to Him not in the trembling fear of the criminal, not in the baffled awe of the thoughtless, no, not even in the charmed rapture of the admiring; but in the sweet, indescribable beatitude of finite souls wedded to the Infinite are we to realise and enjoy our God. Hushed be the sounding world with its diversions and distractions, allurements and seductions! Subdued be the raging passions that not only drive away calmness and felicity but banish pure joy and happy inspiration! With admiring souls, in a reverent spirit, with whole-hearted trust, in the hope that believeth all, with the faith that seeth Him in all, let us approach our God in fervent devotion, profound meditation, exulting praise, self-surrendering confession, self-realising communion and self-dedicating faith. Nay He in His mercy touch our hearts, direct our desires, attune

our souls even to His own all-holy, all-surrounding, all-embracing, all-transcending Self; that thus, feeling not only His nearness but the direct personal Touch, the enveloping Presence, the all-engrossing Love, the all-penetrating Righteousness, we may chant His praise with full and joyous hearts and thus know what it is to love the Supreme Lord of Righteousness and Beauty.

ARADHANA.

Thou, All-perfect God, we bow down humbly and reverently before Thee. The heart pants, longs, yearns for Thee with a love that can be satisfied by naught but Thee. We would realise Thee as the immediate Presence, the Substance, the very Essence of all worthy existence. Oh, do Thou grant unto us the insight that may discern and perceive Thee in every particle of creation, in every atom of existence. May we realise Thee as the only Reality, the Basis and Foundation, the true Substance, the enduring Essence, of this whole round of existence; that which shines in the star, blooms in the flower, sings

in the nightingale, smiles in the rainbow, lips in the child ; that permanent, lasting, all-penetrating, all-sustaining Reality, in many forms, in diverse shapes, in weaving itself into the very texture of being. Aye, that Reality Thou art. And as we feel Thee to be the very pith and narrow, the substance and strength of existence, we feel that we are thoroughly and altogether Thine. Thou alone art supremely real. What can we do but throw ourselves on Thee as Thine own ? Take us, employ us, in the building up of Thy purpose. May it be the privilege of every one of us to form even a small link, a little tie, that runs through generations of truth, fact, reality ! We bow down before Thee as Supreme Truth.

Lord of our hearts, Thou knowest all that works, throbs, heaves its head into existence, in the hearts of all. From time without beginning to time without end, the whole history of creation stands revealed before Thine all-searching eye. Unto Thy wisdom is focussed into the middle point of ' Now ' all that has been and all that will be. Caves

where light hath never penetrated ; depths where sound hath never reached ; distances which imagination hath never overtaken—all, all are embraced within Thee. The seer hath not seen, the sage hath not experienced, the poet hath not sung, the scientist hath not spelt out, the painter hath not figured forth, one truth, one fact, but has come from Thee, felt in the heart, lived in the soul, apprehended in the mind, sung on the lip, worked out by the hand, rejoiced in by the eye. Thine infinite purpose runs through vast horizons and untold generations. The gospels of the world are but chapters of Thy Revelation. The prophets of the race are but exponents of Thy Dispensation. In the hearts even of ourselves, Thou hast borne testimony to the Truth that never fails, the Love that never tires, the Righteousness that is never defeated. We know from personal experience how, in the lonely watch of the night when the world is embraced in the silence of sleep, Thou comest into the solitary chamber and knockest Thy way into the heart and soul with flashes of a mysterious message.

Thy piercing wisdom lays bare the core of Truth and Reality to the hungering heart and the yearning soul. We thank Thee that with the mist of sin, with the purblind vision of ignorance, with the torpid spirit of indifference, with the crippled resources of deliberate disobedience, with our failings and drawbacks, burdens and tribulations, Thou hast made it possible for every one of us to say, 'The God of the universe is my God, I can trust in Him; and with the voice that never fails and the direction that never goes wrong, He leads me on under His personal guidance, in His untiring watchfulness.' We surrender ourselves to Thy care, oh Thou all-encompassing God.

Thou art the King of kings. Thou art mightier than the mightiest; loftier than the loftiest heights, profounder than the profoundest depths, that imagination has ever visualised in its flight up or descent down. How can the puny, frail, groping human mind span the infinity of Thy existence? The piercing look of philosophy, lost in its maze of secondary causes, is distanced

out from the innermost shrine where Thou abidest at the centre of existence. Orbs move around orbs, suns follow suns, through illimitable spaces. Since the beginning of creation how ceaseless has been the flight, how amazing the revolution, of the systems of the universe ! In the crust of the earth, in the report of the sun-beam, in the far-reaching flash of the remotest star, in the growth of human civilisation, in the upbuilding of human wisdom, in the unfolding of the human soul, Thy history has been traced back, Thy purpose has been read out, through millions of æons. Yet Thou art not only prefixed in illimitable time but also stretched forth beyond the shoreless ocean of space (how far we know not). Yet how near Thou art unto us, oh God ! If Thou hadst stood aloof in Thine own infinite distance, in the recesses beyond the reach of fancy-flight, how dreary, how solitary, what a desert, what a desolation, should this world have been ! Vastness and yet nearness ; immensity and yet immediacy ; all-engrossing and yet all-embracing ; far as the mind may travel, yet near as

the heart can wish—Thou art so dear, dear to every spirit. Beloved of my heart, I reach out my heart and seek to gather Thee up. Oh, pardon my presumption. I seek to gather Thee up into my own heart, that I may say, ‘The Lord is mine: the Lord is wholly mine. I am His: I am wholly His.’ Thou *art* mine, I *am* Thine. That is enough, absolutely, perfectly enough, for what the soul needs, the heart wishes, the mind wants and the senses crave. Lord of infinite vastness and yet my Lord too! Am I not exalted, transformed, transfigured, beyond the might of the subtlest pollution? I, the child of the Infinite One, the heir of the wisdom of the ages, proclaimed crown-prince of the vastest dominions; I, uplifted to the summit of humanity rejoicing in the sunshine-smile of the Divine Mother, I thank Thee, oh God, for this invaluable, incalculable blessing that I, a worm under the feet, a mote in the dust, even I can call Thee my God, my Father. My ‘Father’—oh, the charm of that name, the sweetness of that name! Even as I utter it, I feel in me the

touch of Thy hand, the throb of Thy heart, the smile of Thy face. My Father; yes, Thou art *my* Father. In lonely journeys, in sorrow-stricken, bed-ridden, world-deserted plights, even then, I have felt Thy fatherly love. In the affection of the well-wisher, in the smile of the friend, in the love of the companion, in the genial delight of the child, in the sweet transport of the wife, I have felt Thee, I feel Thee, as my own, my very own.

ANUTHAPAMU.

Father of sinners! Fountain of mercies! The ugly worm trampled down with careless tread, the coarse thorn that pricks, the harsh sound that jars—these I may wish to improve but may never despise. The sinner is not the castaway leper but the sick brother that needs my nursing. The fallen woman is not the plague-spot of society but the lowly creature I must stretch forth my hand to lift up. The wife is not the caterer unto carnalities but the companion-soul, the co-pilgrim, set to tread the path of duty, to glimpse the light of truth, to swell the music of joy, to raise the voice of praise, with me

unto Thy glory. The child is a charge unto the loving heart. The brother is a call to sympathy. The enemy is an occasion for patience and prayer. Sickness is the opportunity for struggle. Thus we feel the harmony that pervades all, because Thou art the Father of all. Oh, Thou All-merciful, we bow down before Thee in solemn throb.

Thou Saviour of all souls ! Of what avail is Thy majesty if it does not save me ? The greater the love, the surer the help ; the deeper the affection, the readier the remedy. Thee as my Saviour I reverence most. I am sin-stricken, sinking, rotting, filled with sin polluting and tainting my existence. O God, how I deceive the world ! How I cast dust in the eyes of admirers ! How I have drawn a thick veil of ignorance over those that see worth in me ! Thou knowest there is no sin I have not committed—the sin of carnality, the sin of jealousy, the sin of envy, the sin of ill-will, the sin of corruption, the sin of injustice, the sin of prejudice, the sin of slander, the sin of hard-heartedness, the sin of apathy, the sin of spiritual

pride, of moral pharisaicalness, of intellectual superiority ! O, these sins and more I lay bare before Thee ; and while I tremble and sigh and groan, I feel the comfort, cheer and consolation that *Thou* art my Saviour. We are all sinners, I the vilest, in Thy sight. Yet if Thy righteousness is strict and severe, Thy love is gentle and gracious : - and Love stoops where Righteousness stands stiff, and Love availeth, Love prevaieth ultimately. Why, even Thy righteousness combats our sin and wins us over to Thee. The natural world would not be darker if the Sun did not shine. But oh, how gloomy, how plunged in Cimmerian darkness, would be the spiritual sphere if Thou, the central Sun of Righteousness, but ceased to shine a while in the heaven of the heart ! In the sting of pain, in the qualm of conscience, in the shock of circumstance, in the anguish of bereavement, in the isolation of offence, Thy righteousness speaks, warns, sustains and saves. Oh, Thou Righteousness, we render thanks unto Thee. Thou art all-sufficient unto us. Thou art One ; and in Thy Oneness, we feel one. Many

in body, yet one in spirit—how should my word reach my brother, my empty breath suggest its meaning and significance, if we were not one in spirit? We are one, soul at one with soul, because we are gathered into unity in and through Thee, Supreme, All-unifying God!

PRARDHANA.

We entrust ourselves to Thy keeping. We beseech Thy mercy. We invoke Thy inspiration. We commit ourselves to Thy goodness. Do Thou guide us! Be Thou with us now and for ever!

It is delightful for the child and the mother to be together in the clasp of affection. It is delightful for the poet and the muse to be together on the mountain-height of inspiration. It is delightful for the sinner and the saviour to be together in the closet of confession. It is delightful for the disciple and the master to be together in the cloister of reflection. It is delightful for the lover and the beloved to be together in the chamber of communion. It is delightful for the spouse and the spouse to be together in the sanctuary of

the home. Let us now, every one of us, feel the delight, enjoy the blessing, of being alone with the Alone as Friend, Guide, Saviour, Inspirer, Lover, Beloved, and seek and secure, through His blessing and grace, the ineffable joy of personal communion with Him.

DHYANAMU.

(Congregational prayer chanted.)

We bow down before Thee and render thanks unto Thee. Thou art supreme, solitary, in grandeur; yet all-pervading in immensity. We render thanks unto Thee for the countless blessings showered down upon us here below. We thank Thee for the heaven and paradise that Thou hast created, in varying measure but in certainty of fact, in the hearts of Thy devotees. In our struggles, be Thou our Support. In our endeavours, be Thou our Stay. In our attempts to advance, be Thou our Prompting Spirit. In our efforts to soar up, be Thou our uplifting Inspiration. We bow down before Thee. Lead us from untruth to truth; deliver us from darkness into light; save us from the death of sin and nestle us in

the immortality which consists in companionship with Thee. Thou All-inspiring One, we tremble with awe before Thy throne. Do Thou keep us under the smile of Thy affection and save us through the grace of Thy righteousness ! This is our humble prayer : do Thou most mercifully vouchsafe it !

UPADESAMU.

It has been said that all Theology is an attempt to name the Unnameable, as all Religion is an attempt to realise the Unrealisable, all morality an attempt to imitate the Inimitable. It does happen inevitably, therefore, in the pursuing of Religion and its expression that we do say and suggest things which will not bear close scrutiny, if minutely analysed, but report themselves as essentially true to the heart that thus distils out Truth from the midst of much that is weak and frail with the weakness and frailty of human language and thought.

Most of us have heard of that wonderful saint, Meera Bai—a Rajput princess, but, unlike princesses in general, touched by Divine Love and exalted above all thrones to that

seat of glory where the soul feels that not for the monarch's throne, not for the rod of authority, not for the mine of wealth, would it give up the invaluable honour of saying, 'I am God's.' Wholly absorbed in God, the Princess would often in her room be engaged in conversation when alone; and her husband, a powerful, manly, self-respecting chieftain, unable to understand the mystery, thought she was speaking to some third person. At last, he broke open the door, rushed in and asked, "where is he?". He found none there. "Where is he?" he asks. "Where is the other person that you were talking to? Where has he escaped?" And the Princess answers, "He is there before thine eye"; but he could not see Him. He could not bear it. She had to go away. She left Rajasthan and went to Brindavan. The most renowned of the Saints at Brindavan was Rup Gosai; and to him she sent word, saying, "I should like to see Gosai and pay my respects to him." Rup Gosai was of a profoundly devotional spirit; but he had not outlived the general limitations of a Hindu Saint and, therefore,

said, "Woman and coin cannot approach me."
 "Rup Gosai!" said the Princess, "what is he that he should say he is a male? He is a woman. In Brindavan *Sri Krishna* is the only male. If Gosai thinks himself a male, then he has slowly and cunningly got into the Lord's place in the bridal-chamber, and must be driven out."

We, who call ourselves Theists and this wide world a paradise—have we not to learn from this the corresponding but magnified lesson that there is only one male—God—and we are all females, women? It must be difficult for one to get into that female relation to the Lord. Aye, in a country where, in spite of intimate, devout affection, there has been wanting intimate, devout inter-communion between man and woman, it is still more difficult to feel that the soul has no sex. Gradually, however, it is given to the soul to work itself into the sex of the woman and realise the Lord as the male, the Spouse Divine of the human soul, as Madame Guyon would put it in her *Thought of Religion* as the marriage of the finite with the Infinite Soul.

Says Francis Newman—A man may begin his religion in awe and fear, subdue it into philosophy and poetry, and gain personal attachment to the Lord as Father; but he perfects his religion when he makes his soul the woman-soul and God the Lord of the soul. And this is how Newman beautifully distinguishes woman's love for the husband from all other kinds of love. Under the latter, the command is, 'Thou *shalt* love the Lord'. Love is there a duty. Under the former, it is, 'Thou *mayest* love the Lord.' Love is here a delight, the priceless privilege of the heart, the complete rapture of the soul. Truly, if love is the master-passion of man, it is the very life-blood of woman. To her love is life—life and love are inseparable. You cannot maintain the creeper, if you cut off its living contact with the soil below through the trunk. In other kinds of love, at most, we cannot but be dependent; but in woman-like love, we love to be dependent, not out of helplessness, not through prudence. Independence is out of the question—it were an outrage. The woman who is a

true wife is a widow the moment she has been separated from her lord. Her whole life is focussed and centred into one sentiment, love. Therefore, to be dependent as a privilege, a joy, an invaluable pleasure to the soul—that is the test of woman's love.

To take some examples. A man once observed to his wife, "So and so was an excellent woman. The moment she heard her husband was dead, she went and threw herself into a well." The wife replied, "I do not think, though, it is the highest kind of love." "Why?" "I cannot tell, but so I feel." This man went out a-hunting; and, while away, he got up a story that he had been carried away by a tiger, and he sent a messenger to carry the news to his wife. "Madam, thy husband has been carried away by a tiger." The woman heard these words and she dropped down dead. That is perfect love. It needed not the extraneous help of a well to destroy the life; on the other hand, love gone, life too was gone instantly with it. Indeed, this quality of love was what brought into being the institution of *sati* in

the first instance, though, like all other institutions, as the external social obligation superseded the inner impulse, it became a mere ceremony and, therefore, an outrage.

Such true love continues to show itself in various ways:—

(A)(1) The wife shall not utter the name of the husband. Of course, this injunction has now become mechanical, but leave it alone and see what is at the back of the observance. It is this—that there is no name to utter. We give names when there are two or more similar things; and we do so to distinguish and identify them. Wherein lies the need for a name when there is but one thing of its kind? Hence it is that Carlyle has said, the first cloth the Soul is wrapped in is the name: the Soul comes into this world without a name. The husband has no name—he is the only one of his kind. In Seetha's *swayamparam*, the several princes pass before her, and Seetha names them in order. But when the turn comes to Rama, she merely bows her head. There is no name to be uttered there. And they who come upon the

image of God in countless forms at every turn seldom take the name of the Unnameable upon their lips, and that, even because He never is absent from their hearts.

(2) The counterpart, again, of the above-mentioned attitude is this. It is said of Ananda Mohan Bose's mother that, when in the course of conversation any one uttered her husband's name, she would say, 'pause', and then for a while, with folded hands, would contemplate upon, and bow down before, that name. Likewise, we who note the name of God in and amid a myriad names, we must say to our mind, 'pause', to bow down in reverence before the next step is taken.

(B) (1) That sprightly young lady, Elizabeth Bennet, in Jane Austen's novel asks her lover, "Why do you love my name and not other ladies?" And he answers, "It is for thy keen intellect, for thy sharp wit." "Well, well, that is to say, for my impertinence?" "No, no! rather, for your ultimate good sense." Then the lady, like the true wife that she is, says, "Yes, my reputation is in your

hands. Upon you will depend whether it be impudence or good sense." So the ultimate first principle in Religion is trust in God's keeping: Thy reputation is in His hands. Let the whole world conspire against the wife; if the husband suspects her not, she is happy, she is contented. But if the husband comes to have some suspicion, the whole world may swear that she is the very pink of purity and perfection, yet she has no place in the husband's heart. And so, if I am alright with my Lord, says the soul, it matters not even if I am all wrong with the world.

(2) And this position also has a counterpart. If it may be so put without presumption, even His reputation is in my hands, as mine is in His. Nobody can call the Lord bad without at once hearing a voice of protest from His love, the *Bhakta*: 'you know nothing about Him. I, who have been with Him in the closet, I, who have been with Him at the hearth and in the home, I know what He is.' It is said of Mahomet the Prophet that, as his wife believed in him, his

reputation was alright with her and it mattered not what the world thought of him. When Carlyle wrote his *Sartor Resartus*, Jane Welsh exclaimed, "Truly, dear, it is a work of genius!" Thus the reputation of his genius was safe in his wife's hands, despite its disparagement by the critics. As the book was taken round from publisher to publisher only to meet with scant courtesy, his heart all the while was sustained by the consciousness of the grateful fact that his co-pilgrim did feel assured of its worth. In like manner, the Lord's reputation is in my hands. The 'blind world', looking through the tinted glasses of perverted vision, may raise its random mock of blasphemy; nevertheless, the silent heart, possessed of the clear light of illuminating intercourse, bears about sufficient counter-testimony to the unimpeachable goodness of its Lord. The simple security of its own 'I have felt' is enough and more than enough refutation against the subtle sophistry of all others' 'Believe no more'.

(C) (1) Again, it is said of the *Gopis* that they would dance and dance in a ring around

Sri Krishna because they so rejoiced in their Lord. And rightly so, for theirs was a joy that could not be contained. If a stimulus to your emotion is put in, you cannot sit quiet, you must frisk about. Let some piece of good news be brought to you, and it must express itself in external rapture. Should some stirring thought strike you, it must figure itself forth in the beaming eye, the quivering lip and the shaking hand. Hence, the *Gopis* too danced because they were enraptured. Their whole life was music and dance. We with our One Only Lord in the centre, we must attune ourselves to such harmony as that, in our personal relations with our God.

(2) This relationship has a counterpart also. Sri Krishna was like a central mirror and in him the *Gopis* beheld not alone their respective but also one another's reflections. This rendered each dear to the other; and for his sake they rejoiced in one another's company, thus forming a circle of co-worshippers. We, for our part, come here together, not only to find ourselves reflected in him, not

merely to sing forth our individual *magnificat* before Him, but also to rejoice in one another, by His side. • Public worship thus becomes, not a social appendage to religious life, but the social fulfilment of individual aspiration. I rejoice in Him ; you rejoice in Him ; therefore we rejoice in each other and together in Him. Congregational worship is like bringing a Leyden-jar to be charged and re-charged with spiritual electricity from the central source and circulating it for common behoof. The first thought of the wife, as she has to face any difficulty, is, 'O that I could lean on the strong arm of my husband ! ' And similarly, when any cup of joy is close to her lips, her foremost wish is to pass it on to him as well, that she may share it with him. We are thus a ring around the Lord, and to the Lord we come with our crosses and our crowns, our tears and our triumphs.

(D) (1) Further, after a faithful genuine marriage there can follow no thought of divorce. The whole progress of civilization has been summed up as the uplifting of marriage out of the mire of physical

enjoyment on to the mountain-top of spiritual 'monogamy—monogamy not merely of the body but also of the soul, not enforced by the world but embraced by the spirit. This impossibility of separation or second love is born of the vital principle that, where once love has been, there love is bound to be for ever. Where God once loves, He loves for ever. The wedlock tie of union between the finite and the Infinite knows no severance—the best proof and evidence, this, of immortal life and love through eternity.

(2) And this condition, moreover, carries its own counterpart. The test of true religion is that the soul rejoices to be alone with the Alone, alone to the Alone, so that the only convincing argument against idolatry is the soul's spontaneous fidelity, which relishes spiritual worship, which enforces spiritual loyalty, which generates spiritual fellowship, and which sustains spiritual immortality. The Lord is my Joy, because He is the Lord of my soul. I love to be dependent upon Him. His beauty enraptures me. His sanctity enthrals me. His harmony evokes

the latent harmony in my soul.

It is thus with each Brahmotsav. The in-coming of the Lord is but the home-going of the soul; the re-union of the soul with the Supreme Soul is but the recelebration of their marriage. And as with the birth of a new child the husband and the wife sit together and renew within themselves the pledge of mutual devotion and say, 'We rejoice once more over this new offspring of ours', so with the advent of this Brahmotsav, let us, each one sit together with the Lord and renew the pledge and promise of devotion to Him.

PRAYER.

Thou Lord of our heart and soul, we count it a rare blessing, a sublime joy, a lasting boon, that we can address Thee as the *Prananadha* of our spirit. Thou Lord and Master of the human soul, feeling Thy nearness and Thy dearness, we feel we are nothing. Thou art all, and we can be nothing unless it be in relation to Thee, as dwelling in Thee. Thou, O Lord, indwelling in the heart, eushrined in the soul, we seek

to dwell in Thee. Spread Thou the beatific vision. Infuse Thy light into these, Thy followers. May we ever chant Thy glory and praise ! Thy peace dwell on earth, Thy love reign here below, Thy children be blessed ! May all souls find their salvation in everlasting love and adoration and joy ! Blessed be Thou and Thy name, now and for ever ! Thy light shine on our path, Thy love be our ruling principle, Thy grace avail evermore for us ! Glory be to Thee for ever and ever !

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

II
SERVICE
with Sermon on
LOVE AND PRAYER.
(1916)

UDBODHANA.

HYMN—*Padapranthe rakho sevake* (Bengali)

Unto Him, the ultimate Refuge of all worlds; unto Him, the End and Goal, the Destiny and Fulfilment, of all lives; unto Him, the Indweller and the All-pervading One; unto Him, the sustaining Stay and Strength of all; unto Him, the Light of life and the Delight of the heart; unto Him, the Adored of the soul and the Eternal Companion of all pilgrims; praise and glory, thanks and salutations, from all! With hearts yearning for Him, with souls thirsting for Him, with minds feeling after Him, with lives panting for Him, we seek Him; and, lo and behold, He is with us, in us, around us. How intimate, how enduring, how

affectionately, providentially, everlastingly interested in each one of us He is ! Therein lies His vastness, His greatness, His glory, His majesty, that He thus gives Himself unto each one of us. Not the general care, not the universal law, not the all-comprehensive view and vision, but the particular providence, the individual attention, the personal interest, the direct concern, the intimate association—this makes Him my God, your God and the God of each one of us. In each one of us and yet out of all ; within all and yet embracing all ; underlying all and yet overtopping all ; pervading all and yet eluding all, He is the absolute, perfect, all-inclusive Reality, the all-entrancing Experience. Him we adore as the God that is all-sufficing, all-in-all unto us. We call Him our Father. We cling fast unto Him, with the assurance of children, as our mother. We follow the Glorious One, with the trust of disciples, as our Guide and Preceptor ; and we everlastingly confide in Him as our sure Saviour. Blessed be He that He so sufficeth unto us in all our needs and wants ! We have Him ;

and what else need we have? Our whole life is indwelt by Him and all our days are wholly reckoned and entirely sketched out by Him. In the immense universe there is not a nook, not a speck, where He is not in all His reality and directness. In the whole eternity of time there is not a minute, not a wink, when He does not abide in all His fulness and glory. He is the all-sufficing and all-embracing God. He is my God ; the Adored One of each one of us and of us all. And we are here to adore Him with the trust, the self-surrender, the joy, the ecstasy that forgets itself in the Beloved. Let us adore Him who, as we have sung, is all Truth and all Love—that Truth which is enough to comprise all philosophy and exhaust all wisdom ; that Love which is the substance of all religion and the fulfilment of all life. He is the All-true and All-loving God—that God who is eternal Truth and eternal Love ; who is the essence, the substance, the stay, the support, the spirit, the reality of all ; who cares for, controls, guides, caters to, provides for, takes eternal

interests in, all—the All-true and the All-loving God, the Adored One of all hearts.

ARADHANA.

Thou Beloved, the Dear One of hearts, how can we sufficiently thank Thee that Thou hast brought us together this happy morning? We come to see Thee, know Thee, feel Thee, embrace Thee, live in Thy love, enjoy Thy company, not out of compulsion, not even from selfish interest, but with the yearning of hearts, together to sit with Thee and worship Thee, sing Thee, glorify Thee, rejoice in Thee, take from Thee strength and courage unto our hearts and lives. We come unto Thee even with the certainty of past experience, with the confidence that we never come in vain unto Thee. Thou art nearer than our own bodies, closer than our own hearts, more intimate than the workings of our own minds with one and all of us. How can we miss Thee, how can we lose sight of Thee? Patent as fact, sure as reality, intimate as friendship, interested as love, intent as providence, enduring as fidelity, sufficing as wisdom—

Thou art unto each one of us a treasure, a blessing, an ecstasy, which words fail to describe but the heart can never fail to realise. Thou Beloved, how formal it looks that we should fold our hands and bend our heads when Thou art nearer than both hands and head ! And yet what may we do, frail creatures of habit and custom, but bring unto Thy altar and foodstool these offerings of love with folded hands and bended heads and reverent hearts and trusting souls ?

We praise and glorify Thee as the Eternal Truth. It is Thy truth that makes the world so gloriously certain. In the rotation of the seasons ; in the recurrence of night and light ; in the repetition of blessings that descend and grow, now in rain and now in crop ; in the abundance of light and life with which the whole world is teeming ; in every brook and every stream ; on the slopes of the hills and in the depths of the seas ; in the delights of sky and the sublimities of heaven ; in the beauties of fields and in the joys of homes—we behold Thee as the eternal, everlasting, never-failing God. Thou givest unto the universe

its basis, strength, durability, cogency, its whole organisation of system and method. How unfailing are Thy designs and purposes, and how sure are Thy ways and methods ! From eternity to eternity Thou hast mapped out, as if in one pin-point, the plan, the design, the destiny, of the universe. Behold the world ! Oh the praise and glory of it ! It goes on with the certainty of a mechanism and the regularity of a clock ; so that, purblind as we are, we miss Thee and fall into the illusion that Thou art not there. But Thou art there, pervading all, weaving Thyself into all, threading Thy way into all, infusing Thy spirit into all, intently glowing and throbbing through all. Blessed, blessed be Thou, the All-true God !

In the senses and faculties, in the activities of body and mind, we behold Thee. There falleth not a sparrow, there groweth not a blade of grass, there crawleth not the tiniest worm, there playeth not the thinnest particle in the sunbeam, but Thou art there in all Thy truth and reality. All goodness is Thy purpose, and all law is Thy method. Thou,

the eternally true God, *Sath*, we live in Thee; we stand by Thee; we trust in Thee; we confide in Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name!

How loving Thou art! What can I call Thee? 'Father'? What a weak word! 'Mother'? Sweet but inadequate! 'Friend'? True but far below the truth! Father, mother, friend, protector, saviour, companion, lover and beloved, what art Thou not unto me? My own dear God! How loving, how personally loving, how permanently loving, how intently loving, how sweetly loving, how certainly loving Thou art! All may fail. Streams may flow back. Winds may be hushed in silence. Stars may be quenched in darkness. The heavens may be rolled up into a carpet. Earth may break up into mist. But Thy love never fails, is never exhausted. Unto my sin there is only one return, mercy. Unto my helplessness there is only one provision, care. Unto my ignorance there is only one remedy, protection. Unto my faltering steps there is only one prop, trust in Thee. My beloved God, the

heart weighs with the weight of gratitude, as I think of Thy manifold blessings. How ample is Thy Love—ample as the world, far-reaching as the universe! The remotest stars are the tokens of Thy love. The deepest depths of the abysmal sea are but the recesses of Thy love. The struggles of sin are but evidences of Thy love. The pangs of the sorrowing are but the manifestations of Thy loving presence. Man lifts his cruel hand against man; and while we clash and tear, Thou bindest the wounds, Thou knittest the hearts, Thou rouses the sympathies, Thou enkindlest the affections, Thou pronounces the beatitudes—Thine is the benediction. Thou, All-loving God, I bless Thee and glorify Thee that Thou hast revealed Thyself even unto me, the sinning, the callous, the hard-hearted. Thou hast laid this great treasure at my feet. I look down on the little worm that crawls, the tender blade that grows, the modest flower that blooms. Yet all do speak of Thy love; love that, thus revealed in all, wears innumerable, beautiful forms. The earth is Thy love. The heavens are Thy love. All

objects are Thy love. All ages are Thy love.
 The prophet that is possessed, the sage that is
 serene, the saint that is sanctified—not only
 these but the sinning, the struggling, the
 frail, the weak, the lowly, all, all are the very
 embodiment, the expression, the fulfilment
 of Thy love. I rebel, Thou chastisest : that is
 love. I am stiff, Thou subduest : that is love.
 I am negligent, Thou compellest : that is
 love. I am dutiful, Thou cheerest : that is love.
 I yearn, Thou suppliest : that is love. I wish
 to know, Thou givest the inspiration : that
 is love. I fall off, Thou runnest after me :
 that is love. I come back home, Thou with
 open arms welcomest me : that is love. I
 look the unkind look, Thou chidest me : that
 is love. I sigh, Thou soothest : that is love.
 I cry, Thou comfortest : that is love. I open
 my eyes, Thou revealest beauty : that is love.
 I prick up my ears, Thou sendest harmony :
 that is love. I open my mouth, Thou puttest
 into it the blessing of food : that is love. The
 breeze comes, Thou embracest me with the
 refreshing cheer of satisfaction : that is love.
 The morning returns, Thou restorest the

whole world to me : that is love. The night comes, Thou depositest back the world with care for me : that is love. I wake from bed, the day's work awaits me : that is love. I lay aside my work, Thou retest my weary head upon the pillow of Thy lap : that is love. My Beloved, my Father, my Mother, my God, blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou !

Thou all-true and all-loving God, if I had a thousand voices and a thousand tongues, could I praise Thy greatness, could I describe Thy goodness, could I exhaust Thy being, could I acknowledge my debt ? Feeble, frail, faltering, I bring this humble tribute to Thy altar and footstool. Do Thou deign to receive it and bless it that it may be pleasing and refreshing unto this sinner. Blessed, blessed, thrice blessed be Thou !

PRARDHANA.

HYMN—*Brahmamu neppudu bhaktini golichina* (Telugu)

Thou art the Creator, the Source, the Fountain-head, the Parent, the Spring of all that exists. Thou art the Preserver, the Sustainer, the Providence, the Care-taker, the

everlasting, ever-vigilant Guardian of all that exists. Thou art the Indweller, the Sustainer, the secret Strength, the unfailing Energy and Life of all that exists. Thou art the Lord, the Master, the Sovereign, the Ruler, the Controller, the Ordainer and Destiny of all that exists. Thou art the Forerunner, the Guide, the Preceptor, the Leader, the Fulfiller of all that exists. Thou alone art supreme. Thou alone art self-sufficing. Thou alone art perfect, pure, immaculate. Thou art absolutely One. Unto the unwise Thou art the Mentor. Unto the erring Thou art the Corrector. Unto the sighless Thou art the guiding Light. Unto the falling Thou art the sustaining Strength. Unto the great Thou art the towering Majesty. Unto the lowly Thou art the sanctifying Grace. Unto the good Thou art the blessing of Love. Unto the evil Thou art the correction of penitence. Thou God of each one of us, we seek shelter in Thee alone. We find refuge in Thee alone. Thou art the harbour unto all that are to cross this ocean of life. Thou art the haven unto which are bound all craft that

sail across the vast deep. Thou art the eternal home, the everlasting happiness, in whom all lives find their fulfilment and blessing. We confide in Thee and trust in Thee. We surrender ourselves unto Thee. Be Thou our load-star, our captain, our pilot, our steersman. Take us along the pathless ocean of life according to Thy pre-ordained purpose. Do Thou so shape and guide our course that all our days we may be engaged in Thy service, aye, absorbed in Thy service. Thus we are Thine, now and for ever, wholly and absolutely Thy children. Lead us, we beseech Thee, from untruth into truth. Lead us, we implore Thee, from darkness into light. Lead us, we supplicate Thee, from death into life eternal; and with that effulgence which comes only of Thy glorious and awe-inspiring countenance, shed the lustre of Thy peace and love upon all hearts and for ever keep us in the bosom of Thy love. Blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

Father, our own Father; God, our dear God; Master, our sovereign Master; Saviour, our merciful Saviour! We devoutly

render thanks unto Thee that Thou hast brought us together. Do Thou grant us the blessing, the welcome, invaluable blessing, of feeling Thy nearness, realising Thy dear-ness, enjoying Thy loving-kindness, as Thou hast designed and ordained for each one of us. May we have a glimpse of Thy beautiful, hallowed, honoured, adored countenance as it reveals itself through the universe! May it be ours to say and feel and know that the Lord is glorious and merciful! Vouchsafe unto us, we beseech Thee, one whisper, one gleam, one smile, one twinkling joy, that we may go refreshed, strengthened, rejoicing. This is our humble prayer; do Thou mercifully vouchsafe it.

UPADESAMU.

My dear friends,

Here we are with the members of the Young Men's Prayer Union—*Young Men's Prayer Union*. Let us, therefore, with trust in God's merciful guidance, dwell for a while upon the root principle, the vital truth, that prayer stands for. I shall begin with a story

from a book called "Everlasting Hope." There was a pitman, a worker in the mines. His name was, let us say, George. He was a married man, and he had some children. Among them was one little daughter, Rosie, seven years old. This pitman was an average type of worker in the mines. He worked like a horse, toiled day and night, to make both ends meet. Having worked hard, he was eager for a portion of joy. He felt he had a right to pleasure. He who works hard can very well seek enjoyment. Thus he would take pleasure : now a cup of drink, now a game of cards, again sight-seeing and merry-making ! He would go home, and what he could save, after the day's little expenses upon personal enjoyment, he would give to his wife. He would not utter a harsh word to his wife or children. Thus he was living a fine life ; a satisfactory life ; if not a good life, not a bad life ; and the wife had no reason to complain, though she had no reason to be satisfied. Thus months and years pass, till at length George one day comes home and tells his wife, " Look here, Jennie, this day

I have found something that I never imagined before—a great treasure. It is something so dear to the heart, something that I hold so valuable, that I cannot but tell you of the joy of it”. “What may it be?”, asked the wife, “Have you seen a glorious vision? Have you heard the angels sing? Have the doors of heaven opened and revealed a celestial light to you? Have the treasures of earth been disclosed and laid bare to you?” “Ah, it is not that, though it includes all that and much more. I have heard a word. I have received a whisper, I have felt a throb.” “What is it, then?”, asked the wife. “I have come to see, know, feel, realise that God, even the great and glorious God, the eternal God, loves me, even me. Even He loves me, a collier working in the mines with no other language than that of a vulgar tongue, with no other pleasure than a game of cards or a drink of wine, providing no further comforts for wife and children than food and raiment, plodding along a life-path dull, uninteresting;—even for me God cares. God loves me from the majesty of His heavenly

throne. God comes down to dwell with me. From the infinity of His bounty, He provides for me and takes care of me and loves me—loves, not mine, not what I have ; but me, such as I am. That great treasure, that great blessing, that invaluable wealth, I have found. I rejoice. I am exceedingly glad. I cannot contain my delight, and I must speak out my joy to all. God loves me !” Says the wife, “ Dear, you have all along been firm and resolute. You have been kind to me. We have had many a talk, many a chat, around the family fire about the interests of our children, the management of our household ; our needs and wants, our cares and comforts. I have received kindness from you, and in return you have commanded my fidelity and love. But one thing I never mentioned to you. I thought it would be presumption on my part to lead you in such matters as if you did not know. Now since you have started, I will supplement your statement. A certain day, some months ago, for the usual rest of night, I was going upstairs with little Rosie. As we were going up step by step, little

Rosie said, 'Have I not grown old?' I said, 'Yes.' And then, 'Am I not old enough to take care of myself?' 'How do you mean?', said I. 'I wish to give up the daily habit of prayer. Why should I pray as if I were a little child needing somebody to take care of me? My brothers have shaken off that habit. Papa and yourself are not very particular about it. But I continue to say my prayers. My spoon with the liquid food has gone. I take solid food with fork and knife. The apron has made room for the gown. I feel as if I am growing. Why should I pray, when others are not particular?' These were her words, and I felt as if a sharp knife was piercing through my heart. I told the girl not to prattle; for what she was saying about us, her parents, was so painfully, piercingly, true. I could not bear to hear it. My knees began to totter. 'My limbs would not sustain me. And I knelt down and said, 'My Father and my God, teach me to pray.' That is what I have to tell you. As you have said, the good God, the dear God, He loves you and He loves me. And what may we do in

return but prostrate ourselves and say, ' our God, teach us to pray ' ? ”

This anecdote contains the sum-total, the essence and fulfilment, of all philosophy and religion : the knowledge and certainty which says, “ God loves even me ” ; the trust and fidelity and confiding, child-like confidence which says, “ Father, teach me to pray.” He loves me. Can there be any doubt about that ? Oh, my friends, He loves each one of us so much that, even if only a single one were the sole occupant, the only resident, of this universe, He could not then love him more than He now loves us. Such is the wonderful love of God. He loves us, each one of us, with the fulness of His love. No truly loving mother can give to any one of her children a fraction of her love but gives to each one of her darlings her whole heart, her whole attention and exertion. The Divine Mother, the loving, benevolent, ever-compassionate, fondling Mother, gives unto each one of us Her own love, Her full love, Her complete love. Every minute and every second, with every twinkling of the eye and throb of the

heart, the Divine Mother gives Her whole love unto us. In how many myriad ways this love expresses itself ! The light without, the eye within, the feeling soul, all harmonised and set to one purpose and attuned to one joy ! If this is not love, what else can be love ? The whole universe God gives unto each one of us. Note this blessing. Observe it. Scrutinise it. Ponder it. Reflect upon it. Intently dwell upon it. Reverently study it. And you will find that it is a store, an inexhaustible mine, of love. Not merely what you or I consume—that is a mere pittance, a negligible fraction—but what you and I can enjoy by barely witnessing it, by being the *sakshi*—that is vast. One of the Upanishadic texts says : on the tree of life there are two birds ; one eats and enjoys ; the other sees and enjoys. There is blessedness in seeing and enjoying. You see the lamb and the kid caper and jump, the birds chirp and fly, the whole universe teeming with activity and enjoyment. You stand there as the witness of God's mercy, and you are led to realise that God cares for each one

of us. Not merely what He has, according to our narrow, shallow notions, directly given to each one of us for individual consumption ; but what He has yielded for our enjoyment in and through others' delight—that is very vast. If we plugged our ears, if we closed our eyes, if we stuffed our nose, if we held our tongue, if the feeling of touch did not act, if the earth failed beneath our feet, then to some extent we could see how much God cares for each one of us and loves us. It is not all a random waste and prodigality of energy and goodness ; but the whole universe converges and sets into thy heart. Thou art the meeting-place of all the activities, efforts and endeavours, struggles and strivings, of the universe. From time immemorial not a wise word has been uttered, not a good deed has been done, not a noble aim striven after, not a lofty aspiration cherished, but all, all, commingle and flow together for Thee. God thus cares for each one of us by making the whole universe sustain the purpose, further the progress, and foster the growth, of each one of us. God cares for us in that way. Let it

not be fancied that God is a great sovereign ruling over an immense race of subjects near or far, immediate or mediate, subordinate or high-placed, all tendering homage, all rendering service, unto him and receiving piece-meal rewards and blessings, now in undeserved plenty, again in niggardly frugality. No; God is not like that. He is directly interested, He is personally concerned in, and working for, each one of us. In an English novel a character says, "I wish to die for my country." Another comes and says, "I wish to live for my country, for that is a nobler object." To die for one's country is noble. But the process closes there. But to live for one's country—that is nobler still, for the process continues throughout the whole life. And if it is noble to live for something good, then, how merciful is God, who lives for me, who lives in me! It is no presumption, no arrogance, no blasphemy to say that God lives in and for me. God receiveth me as His child. As the providing father and the loving mother live in and for the child, so does God, who mysteriously represents the twain in one.

Verily and truly, Thou livest for me, so that this frail, sinning, sorrowing child might realise the end of life in Thee. How Thou hast been living as the eternal Father, that I might be prompted and persuaded to call Thee and rejoice in Thee as Father ! Thou hast figured forth, portrayed, manifested Thyself, so that I might freely, boldly, confidently reach out my arms and say, " My Father, how Thou hast been living as my teacher, my preacher ! How Thou hast been sketching the outlines of Thy wisdom in the universe—in the characters of light in the stars, in the images of colour in the flowers, in the strains of music in the brooks, in the kisses of movement in the breezes, in the startling sparkle of beauty in rain and in crop ! How Thou hast been disclosing, revealing, manifesting Thyself as if Thou hast set Thyself to this one task of giving me an eternal gospel-lesson in Thy love for me ! Is it competent to me to realise that, truly and verily, Thou art the loving God ? Oh ! How I rejoice, how I feel exalted, elated, that Thou makest me Thy darling ! Yes, my beloved God, Thou

lovest me. This is my joy. This is my satisfaction, ecstasy, rapture. I wish for nothing. I feel no concern; for there is nothing more valuable than that." My God loves me; yes, even He, the eternal God, loves me!

Go and tell the sinner, "Thy God and Father loves Thee." He may despair and say, "How can I be loved? He is Sanctity, I am sin! He is Righteousness, I am iniquity! He is Holiness, I am vice!" But this his assurance shall be that, even in his willingness to think and feel that holiness is so high and unholiness so low that the two cannot come together, the Lord has already put into him the ideal, the inspiration and the uplifting desire, and he too shall be exalted. Even thus God abandons not the unworthy and will not let the sinner gravel in his mire, but by various impulses, suggestions, emotions, brings it home to him that God is desirous of having him. The prodigal is welcome unto Him. Ah! when once I feel that, sin as I may ever so many times, my sin can never exhaust God's forgiving compassion. The

days of my prodigality are numbered. The processes of my sin are foiled. My wretchedness is bound to go. I will arise and turn my back on the old ways—not in the confidence that I am right but that God is alright for me; and I say, “Lo and behold, here I am, do with me as Thou likest. The sinner cannot choose. The prodigal cannot demand. The rebel cannot ask for pardon or leniency. I know, I am sure, I am absolutely certain, that the returning prodigal, the penitent sinner, the loyal rebel are all Thy children. Thou art the loving God.” The child in its helplessness shrieks; in its peevishness kicks; in its perversity blunders. But with every shriek, every kick, every blunder, the child becomes dearer to the mother. “Here is my darling who specially needs my confidence, my protection”—that is what the Mother feels. Unto Her, the very sorry condition of the child is the appeal, the demand, the credential for love and mercy. With my filth and dirt, I leap into Her arms and She cleanses me. In my sin and sorrow, I stumble into Her embrace and She soothes

and saves me. Oh my God, Thou art the loving God, the truly loving God. If Thou art so loving, what may I do but this, only this—to bow down and say, ‘Let Thy will be done!’? This is the acme, the fulfilment, of all prayer. Thy love is informed, illumined, by Thy wisdom. As Thou art the God of Truth (*Sath*), of Love (*Prema Sindhu*), why should I shape and formulate my own plans, why design my methods? No, the sum-total of my prayer is this: I place myself in Thy hands, I confide my secrets to Thee; do Thou make Thy will mine. I say, ‘Lo, lead me, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, the appalling tumult, the gaping, yawning, engulfing abyss, the receding light—lead me on, kindly Light. Not my course but Thy course, not my purpose but Thy purpose, not my will but Thy will: not as a cross to be borne but as a joy to be realised, a strength to be acquired, a success to be achieved!’

I happened once to be travelling. A Christian missionary was my fellow-traveller. He asked me where I was coming from. I

said I was coming from such and such a place. I, in my turn, asked him where he was coming from. He said he was coming from Rajahmundry. He asked me whether I knew Mr. Veerasalingam Pantulu and his works. He added he was learning Telugu and had been advised to read Mr. Veerasalingam's essays as models of good Telugu, and he said he was reading the essay on Idolatry. "Mr. Veerasalingam Pantulu condemns idolatry", he observed, "but he does not tell us what to worship. He does the negative work. Where he falls blank, we, Christian missionaries, supply the gap. You destroy the idols, and we give you Christ to worship". I said within myself,—it was too sacred to be put to him—"If I am taken from idols, am I left blank? Is not my God enough to worship? Worship Christ and Mahammad and other prophets? By all means; but worship in the lower sense of admiring, trusting and following; but not worship in the higher sense of saying, 'Make me Thy own. I seek to have no separate existence. Make me a reflection, a replica, of Thy own self, even as the child

bears marks of identity with the mother.' If God is not available to me, what avails all else? My God, He is available to me to worship—even to me, the sinner—aye, even to the sinner more than to the saint. The saint is near and does not need Him so much. I am so far away and yearn and long, I have a greater need and right, to worship Him. Thus, as the husband, George, said, "I have found a treasure. God loves me"; and as the wife, Jennie, said, the return current, the return journey, the return process of mutual recognition, appreciation and assimilation is this: "Grant me the heart to pray. Teach me how to pray. Shape my prayer. Be Thou the end of all my prayer. May my whole life be a prayer! May all that I do and say be one everlasting prayer to Thee; all my acts the beads I tell in my daily *japam*; all the words I utter the hymn I eternally chant of praise unto Thee!" And for you, my friends, at your stage of life this is particularly necessary. As Rosie said, "The spoon and liquid food are gone. The fork and solid food are come. The

swaddling-clothes have given place to the gown. I can take care of myself"; so you may feel and you have a right to feel, 'I am young and no longer a child but a young man with surging energies, with blooming youth, with assurance and confidence and self-reliance!' You have a right to say, 'Can I not stand on my own legs?' But, remember, the legs on which you stand, the earth on which you stand, the energy which makes you stand, all need and imply the stay and support, the indwelling strength and the informing wisdom, of the Invisible and yet Only Real. It is by Him that your strength is augmented, your confidence is increased, your joys are multiplied, your purposes are amplified. At the threshold of your life, remember that, as the light that illumines, as the life that energises, as the sweet which gives relish, as the harmony that enraptures, as the beauty that ravishes, as the love that transforms earth into heaven, God is Mercy available unto all. Will you not avail yourselves, then, of that Mercy to the fullest by surrendering

to that Mercy in prayer—not the prayer of petition ; no, not the interested prayer of selfishness ; no, not even the prayer of supplication,—all that will now and then be necessary—but, above all, as including all, the prayer of self-surrender which says, ‘ Oh, teach me to pray. Give me the heart to pray. Make Thy will mine. ’ Let Thy will be done ! Teach me Thy will. Adjust me to Thy will. Command that I may cheerfully take Thy will for mine and do and say and think and feel and realise, always and everywhere, that which is calculated to advance Thy will and to glorify Thy name.’

CONCLUDING PRAYER.

Our God and Father, we adore, praise, glorify Thy name. Even unto us, humble creatures, Thou hast granted the supreme privilege of calling Thee Father. Truly, Thou art our Father. Thou knowest how dear we are, each one of us, unto Thee. Our salvation, our joy, lies in this. As princes endowed with Heaven’s own gift of truth and love and righteousness for our own heritage and portion and possession, how exalted we feel as

Thy children ! Beloved Father, we render our whole-hearted thanks, we tender our whole-souled gratitude, unto Thee that Thou hast proclaimed even unto us that we are Thy children and Thou art our Father. Blessed, blessed be Thy name ! As we feel that we are all Thy children, may we learn also to feel that every creature, every crawling worm, every tiny insect, every animalcule and every particle are dear to us as gold and precious as diamond, because they are Thy children. Thus may ours be the prayer of love, of self-surrender, of self-abnegation ! Make us wholeheartedly Thine. Thy kingdom come ! Thy truth triumph ! Thy will be done ! Thy love prevail ! Blessed be Thou and Thy name for ever !

Brahma Kripahi Keralam !

Om ! Santih ! Santih ! Santih !

HYMN—*Prabhu Viswapitha Kari Vandanahe* (Bengali).

III
SERVICE
with Sermon on
WORK AND WORSHIP.
(1908)

UDBODHANA.

Blessed and glorified be the Supreme God, before whom we bow down in gratitude and in reverence, whom we seek to embrace in love and adore in devotion! Blessed is the hour when we are thus met together here to worship our dear, loving God! He is our Father and Mother, Friend and Protector, the Source of all strength and the Goal of all hope. We rejoice in His presence. We delight in His fellowship. We are filled with gratitude in His company. Supreme is the privilege that is vouchsafed unto us to adore Him, to receive His grace, to glorify His greatness, to proclaim His unfailing wisdom and love. To meditate upon Him is to be immersed in the Ocean of Blessedness. To

commune with Him is the sweetest of our pleasures. To pray unto Him is to open our hearts to Him who is our surest Guide and Friend and most inspiring Saviour. And to surrender ourselves unto Him is to entrust ourselves to the care of the all-loving, all-holy, almighty God. Thus we worship Him in the serenity of the soul, in the joy of the heart, with the song of praise and prayer that comes in the fulness of devotion.

Let us bow down unto Him. Let us invoke His blessing. "Let us make ourselves over to Him. May He guide us! May He reveal Himself unto us! May we yearn and thirst after Him! May we be filled with serene temper, cloudless joy, flawless love and stainless purity! May His blessing rest upon this congregation, and may His inspiring presence be realised as our stay in joy and in sorrow!

ARADHANA.

We bow down before Thee, O Supreme God—God of Perfection; Deity to whom devotion is due; Master deserving the unswerving allegiance and loyalty and the unfailing trust and confidence of all spirits;

All-wise and All-holy God, in whose complete and undivided mastery over us we find our stay and strength, the joy and salvation of our souls! We bow down before Thee, O Thou Supreme God—the all-pervading, the all-verifying, the all-justifying, the all-fulfilling Truth that thrills the heart as love and longing; that realises itself in society as sympathy and co-operation; that leads itself through human history as righteous purpose; that vivifies every heart; that makes the strength and energy of the patriot, the passion and poetry of the bard, the truth that sparkles below in the crystal stream and smiles in the fragrant flower and springs as abounding joy everywhere in creation.

Thou art the Eternal Truth that binds particle to particle, that balances the career of all systems. Thou art the Eternal Truth that manifests itself as the assurance of wisdom, the sanctity of piety, the sincerity of humanity. Thou art the Truth that is the basis of the universe, the Truth towards which all bends, the Truth that illustrates itself in every worthy deed, noble aspiration, pure

speech and saintly life. Thou art the Almighty, the All-powerful. Supreme is Thy strength, undivided is Thy monarchy. Thou art the Monarch whom all obey, the Commander whom all serve, the Guide whom all follow, the Leader in whom all trust, the Protector of freedom, the Strength that is the stay and support of all. Thou art the Power that surpasses all time, that leaps beyond all space. Thou art the Presence that is realised in the minutest objects of creation. Thou art the Supreme Ruler from whom all derive their strength, their loyal dignity, their charm and persuasive power. Thou art the Power before whom the tyrant and self-seeker quails, unto whom the lowly look up for help, comfort and consolation. Thou art the Power that leads the vast hosts of innumerable stars over us. Thou art the Power that guides the mysterious mechanism of particle bound to particle. Thou art the Power that sweeps with marvellous velocity in the shooting comet. Thou art the Power that lulls into repose. Thou art, again, the Power that wakes into new life with refreshed vigour and re-installed

energy. Thou art the Power that revives the dying patient and casts the arch of hope across the whole firmament. Thou art, again, the Power that out of the newly-evolved organism calls forth life and vigour. Thou art the Power that silences the roar of human rage.

We bow down to Thee, O Thou Supreme Lord! Thou art True Wisdom, the inspirer of sages, the fountain-source of all prophecy, the true statesman's oracle, the philanthropist's inner conscience. Thou art the husband's controlling wisdom, the wife's sustaining confidence, the child's implicit obedience, the parent's solicitous attention and anxiety. Thou art the Wisdom that plans the mysterious economy of Nature. Thou art, again, the Wisdom that evolves the destinies of nations out of the ruins of the past ever towards the glories of the future. Thou art the Wisdom that dwells in the heart of the sage, that works in the arm of the mechanic, that out of the uncouth raw material shapes useful forms and figures. Thou art the Wisdom that separates man from man that each may

work out his own destiny and, again, unites soul to soul in a universal purpose. Thou art the wisdom in the insight of the sage, in the inspiration of the poet, in the search of the historian, in the observation of the scientist, in the self-forgetfulness of the philanthropist.

We bow down to Thee, O Lord, in reverence. Thou art eternal; Thou art all-sustaining, all-comforting, all-cherishing. Thou art the Peace that dwells in the rage and torment of man, in the fury and ferocity of the wild beast. Thou art the Peace that returns to slumber in wearied humanity. Thou art the Peace that whispers in the ear of the sorrowing and suffering and pours in the baptism of comfort unto the penitent sinner. Thou art the Peace that illustrates itself in bloodshed. Thou art the Peace that manifests itself as love, nurses the sick and realises itself in the rule of sympathy. Thou art the Peace in which the world moves in such harmony.

Thou art the Love of the father, the mother and the friend; Thou art the mysterious Love that visits the wayward and

the wanton ; that emerges ever into a higher wisdom and holier faith. Thou art the Love that sheds the lustre of life by day and gathers the world into its bosom under the canopy of slumbering night. Thou art the Love that places the food in the mother's breast even before the child comes into the world. Thou art the Love whose voice we hear in the silent hour of meditation ; the Love that presses itself in gentle and patient solicitation. Thou art the Love that lifts up the lowly to the reach of the lofty ; the Love that makes kings find their highest pleasure in the prosperity of their subjects. Thou art the Love that deposits the possibilities of the future in the hidden caves of men's minds. Thou art the Love that makes the wealth of the wealthy a trust for the poor.

ANUTHAPAMU.

We are sin-stricken, O Lord. We are sorrow-laden. We have yielded to temptations. We are absorbed in appetites. We are carried away in the current of the world's passions. We, therefore, cry unto Thee for

hope and peace and appeal unto Thee for rescue and redress. Thou art verily the sinner's God rather than the saint's God. We beseech Thee, O Thou Merciful God, to take us, to cleanse us, to put new strength into us and make us Thy children and disciples. Thou art the Power before which wickedness fails, the Current by which iniquity is washed away. O Thou Supreme Saviour of all souls, do Thou chastise us ; infuse new strength into us. Thou art the Absolute, Undivided, One only without a second. We pray unto Thee with all the warmth of sentiment, the sincerity of self-surrender, the firmness of trust and the intensity of devotion. Be Thou with us now and for ever ! *Om ! Thath Sath !*

UPADESAMU.

I suppose several of you are acquainted with the beautiful, brief but very pregnant statement of the Theistic Creed, *the Brahma Beejam* as it is called, enunciated by Maharsi Devendranath Tagore. It consists of four articles : the first, referring to the unity, the supremacy and the majesty of God as the Author of all ; the second, referring to the

extent to which man can, with his limited nature, realise the qualities of God as they manifest themselves in devotion; the third, declaring that, to be blessed here and hereafter, the one mighty means is the worship of the All-perfect Being; and the fourth, laying down that worship consists in loving the Supreme Being and exercising oneself in such acts as are approved of Him. It is of the last article that I wish now to speak.

*Thasmin preethih thasya priya karya sadhanancha
thadupasanameva.*

The love of the Supreme Being and the exercise and practice of such acts as are dear unto Him—these constitute worship. To love that Supreme Being and to do such acts as are approved of Him are manifestly two different things. There is a very common notion but, all the same, a very imperfect notion that, if we do such acts as we believe will be approved of God, that is worship. But that is only a half-truth. I say it is only half-truth but not entirely right, as it is not entirely wrong either. If work is worship, then morality is religion, and action sentiment;

and what we do, not the expression of, but the same as, what we feel. But what we feel, cherish, hanker after, is different from the very act of doing. Take the case of a mother and a child not attached to each other—say, a step-mother and a child. The child may have all the attention required; the mother may have all the obedience expected. All may seem smooth; on the one hand the discharge of parental duty, and on the other the expression of filial trust. But the hearts are not united. On the one side attention and on the other side gratitude do not constitute love. We may do such acts as are not wholly objectionable, as, when tested either by the man-made law of government or by God's law of morality, may be alright. But there is not a passion for, a constant feeling after, a permanent sense and an abiding consciousness of, God. The life may be correct, the motive may be above reproach; but what may be called God-consciousness is only weak and occasional. On the other hand, though we seem to love God, our life will not be correct and all we do will not be justified of God.

There are many who go into raptures of praise when they hear or sing of the Deity, who seem to spend the whole time in something connected with worship. They are employed in various pursuits—chanting hymns, reading the scriptures and talking on religious topics. Yet if you watch the general trend of thought, if you observe the average act, the desires most prominent, the leanings most readily given scope to, you will find that, in spite of all this deep-moved religious spirit, there is not a practice, a disciplined religious temper, that seeks naturally to do such acts as are approved of God. Thus to love God ardently is one half of it; and to do acts that are approved of Him is the other half of it.

Let us never be carried away by the notion that, if the set prayer is said, if the prescribed routine is gone through, if the ‘scriptural’ hour is duly spent and all the self-imposed acts duly attended to, all this is equal to loving God. How many instances have we not heard of of the unfortunate relationship where, in order to avoid public opinion, husband and wife agree to contribute to each

other's company, to live together, the husband to supply money, the wife to render service, yet live practically divorced, each going apparently through the round of conjugal duties, yet each failing in self-forgetful devotion to the other? Either may be very eager that the other should not suffer poverty; either may be very jealous of the other's reputation; either may be supplying what the other wants; yet there may be no attachment, though each professes to love the other. If the husband's heart is occupied with the wife, he will have an instinctive disinclination to turn away from her. If the wife is truly devoted, it is impossible for her to feel that so and so is more winsome than her husband. What is it that Savitri said? "A woman's heart is given away only once, not twice." Where the heart is, there also the body must be. The father may frown, Narada may predict, Yama may frighten, Hell may gape, Darkness may threaten; but the heart is devoted. Leave the corpse she cannot; but the soul is going, and where the heart is, there also the body will be.

Similarly, our *whole-hearted* attachment to God is not for what God has given, not for what He is going to give, not for the splendid world, not even for the close watch and attention given to you. It is for Himself. In physical science, we say two atoms cannot occupy the same space. In spiritual science, we say, 'Where God is there can be no other thing (Satan!)'; And the peculiarity is that it is impossible to supersede this God-possession, but everything else can be included or absorbed in it. He is the magnifying-glass through which you see the whole world of panoramic beauty. Devotion to God becomes the crystal through which you see all. Moral life follows it as the inevitable consequence, the necessary result, of that devotion to God. An English Divinel has said, "The miser has hidden his wealth somewhere. Nobody except himself is aware of it. There is no fear of its being lost or shared. Why should he not think it is safe and take no thought of it? Yet send the man anywhere you please; yet the mind is where the money is." The true devotee's

Love of God is like that. It is not for fear of anything but because the mind travels to God, the heart turns to God, the whole sentiment diverts itself to God, as a matter of necessity, as a law of nature. To revert to the old figure, other people also earn money but they look upon it as a means to some end. But in the case of the miser, money is an end in itself. Give him anything. He values it in terms of money. 'What will it fetch?' is the one question. Similarly, with the devotee, with the man of prayer, God is the end of all. Everything in life is valued and assessed with God as the standard. The whole thought is immersed in Him. The greater this absorption and this immersion, the freer it is for all other engagements. It is like a man refreshed mysteriously from a substantial source of refreshment. Some people seem to be ever active. Wherefrom does this energy come? It is because whatever is put into them is assimilated and becomes part and parcel of the body. It weaves itself into the very tissues and cells of the body. Unto the God-absorbed man, whatever he lays deep to

his heart becomes a Divine comfort ; whatever he is engaged in seems a Divine suggestion. The ultimate result of love is that, as love pre-supposes company, so it realises itself in affinity ; and thus man becomes more and more divine and more and more evolved. This shows itself in the divine behaviour of man to all.

Devotion should have no ulterior motive. It should be disinterested, self-constrained. All that follows thereafter as its expression in Duty comes to be done spontaneously, without any external compulsion, any outer prompting, any self-regarding calculation. God is all that He is, because it is His nature. So, too, as Divine nature grows in man, he becomes what he becomes, leaning towards righteousness, yielding to the humble and inspiring, and setting an example to others—all out of spontaneous nature. When Divine nature is thus formed in Him, the doing of such acts as are approved of Him comes of itself. All this comes, as it were, in a chain of evolution. As all acts are prompted by Divine nature, they are justified of Him, not because He is watching and calculating them,

but because, by the Divine coming into and appropriating him, man becomes the receptacle of Divine Energy. This is called *Avatharam* (Incarnation).

The major portion of our acts are cast out of God's acts. If a boy errs, the sympathetic father thinks for himself that there might be something good in that seeming error; only the expression might be bad. He goes about to get at the sound cure for it, to see that the misguided youth does not become a colt among colts but a wielder of human power amidst brute force. Such is also the guidance of God. Such is the rule of Divine inspiration and human progress. Thus the nucleus environs itself in Divine circumstances. The behaviour becomes the appropriate expression of the inner nature.

The object and value of worship is, not to shape God to our bent, but to shape ourselves to His design. Worship is successful in so far as we receive more and more of God and glorify Him by doing such acts as are approved of Him. And thus His kingdom is established when the Deity is reflected in human hearts and manifested in all the acts of human souls. The

peculiarity of worship is that no time is too secular to be prescribed for it. It dreams in your dreams. It goes with you wherever you go. It is the test, the index, the measure, whereby to sound the extent to which there is Divine nature in you. As Keshub Chunder Sen has said, the only heaven that satisfies philosophy and delights the soul is worship and the inner company of God. Like the circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, this Heaven is mysteriously located everywhere and yet it transcends all. Its area coincides with the area of God. We continually and perpetually grow into that Heaven. When there is that consciousness of God, it is under His guidance that everything is done. What is this life? It is like the branch of a tree on which are seated two birds; the one eats, the other sees and enjoys. Through the self-realisation of the eating bird, the seeing bird also rejoices. Thus is worship realised.

PRARDHANA.

Thou, Supreme Master, Loving God! We render our thanks unto Thee. We lay bare our hearts unto Thee. Thou knowest

whether they are the receptacles of iniquity or the thrones that Thou art seated on. Infuse Thy nature more and more into us. Transform us, we beseech Thee. Fulfil the objects of our worship. Make us Thy children and the reproducers of Thy nature in this world. Put into us more of sincerity, of reality, of genuine longing to worship Thee in devotion. Thou art here and everywhere. Thou art with us always. But are we ever with Thee? Are we making ourselves dear unto Thee? We beseech Thee, O Lord, to shape and mould us and our thoughts that they may become dear unto Thee. Put more of sincerity into our daily prayer. May Thy rule prevail, may Thy truth spread, may Thy law be proclaimed, may Thy prayer go forth from every nook and corner of the world! May Divine salvation be vouchsafed unto every man and woman! May Thy law of love be our rule of life! May Thy Kingdom be established in every heart! Blessed be Thou and Thy name now and for ever!

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

IV
SERVICE
with Sermon on
RELIGION AND LIFE.
(1908).

UDBODHANA.

Praise and glory, thanks and salutations, unto our God! We are here to worship and praise Him, to confess our untruths unto Him and implore forgiveness from Him who is the Sustainer, the Indwelling Inspirer, the Stay, the Support and the Strength of all. He is our common Father. In His presence we stand on terms of brotherhood. Around Him we gather as children. He is around us and about us, pervading all, surmounting all, embracing all and harmonising all. He is within us in enlightening the intellect, in purifying the heart, in strengthening the conscience, in sanctifying the soul and in making each and every one of us a living instance, a present illustration and a most

promising and cheering manifestation, of His Wisdom, Love and Holiness. Thus drawn together, thus affectionately and admiringly attached together, unto Him, we are here to worship Him with the intensity of affection, with the depth of devotion. We are here to lay bare unto Him even the innermost thoughts of the most secret nature. We are here to acknowledge, with grateful and reverent hearts, His unfailing kindness and His perpetual guidance. We are here to confess our sins, not in mere passing regret, but in true, abiding repentance; to implore His chastening and refining grace and forgiveness; and to realise how we are the children of the same Parent notwithstanding seeming difficulties and how human heart is knit to human heart in spite of apparent differences. In loyal obedience and brotherly service, may we be purified by His grace, chastened by His Holiness, invigorated by His strength, and enriched by His goodness! May the Lord God, in His mercy, guide us, thus ennobled, thus sanctified, thus realising the beauty of human life!

ARADHANA.

We adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we are here to bear testimony cheerfully and enthusiastically to Thy unfailing help. Thou art the stay, the strength, the support and the sustenance of our lives. What are we but so many manifestations, expressions and illustrations, in time, of Thy Being? Thou art the inner substance and the indwelling essence of our lives. Thou art the very narrow of our existence. We seek to adore Thee as the Supreme Reality. We are wholly dependant upon Thee. We should be empty fleeting names but for Thee. Thou treatest us each as a reality, as an enduring element, a centre of energy and a seat of intelligence. We bow down before Thee and render our obeisance unto Thee. Thou surpassest human comprehension. Who can sound the depths of Thy wisdom? What is there that is hidden from Thee? Even in the tiniest of Thy created objects Thou existest in all the fulness of Thy wisdom and majesty. All our acts are known to Thee. Not a thought we cherish, not an act we do, that is not accorded a place in Thy All-embracing

scheme. Therefore unto Thee as the Supreme Wisdom, before whom we live, from whom we derive our sustaining strength and guiding knowledge, we render our obeisance.

Thou art the Supreme, All-controlling God. Thou art All-surpassing, All-subduing. Thou art the mightiest of the mighty, the most majestic of the majestic, the King of kings, the Ruler of rulers. In the destinies of mankind, in the careers of all creatures, Thy Power is manifested, Thy will is carried out and Thy purpose is fulfilled. Orb rushes around orb in its illimitable orbit with an unerring correctness and a marvellous harmony, only because Thou art the All-regulating God. We, too, live and move and carry out our various activities under Thy guidance. Thou art the Architect of our fortunes, the Wieler of our destinies.

Thou are the All-merciful God, Father and Mother. Truly and Verily, Thou art the Feeder, the Nourisher, the Sustainer, the Custodian and the Companion of each one of us. It is Thy hand that feeds us. It is Thy mercy

that nestles us. It is Thy kindness that protects us. Our mind is amplified, our strength is invigorated, our soul is sanctified, by Thy Grace. Thou art the Home, the Asylum and the Temple of Humanity. Society is nothing but a harmonious co-operation of many souls, sustained by one hope, led by one motive, towards the fulfilling of the same Divine purpose. In that noble army, in that magnificent congregation, all will be unified in glorifying Thee as the common Master and Lord whose kingdom is our Realm, whose order is our unfailing concern and the fulfilment of whose purpose is the highest passion of our life. O God, we bow down before Thee as our Supreme Guide and Controller. Thou art the Saviour; all are dear unto Thee. Every soul, every sinner, the erring, the weeping, the wailing, the miserable and the vain—all are dear unto Thee. Not only the prophet, the sage and the saint, but even we, failing of purpose every day, are dear unto Thee. Thou art the Almighty, All-righteous Saviour. Make each one of us, by Thy guidance, a new pilgrim treading the path of Truth and

Righteousness. We are aware of our iniquities. Though we are smarting under burdens, yet let us put confidence in Thee. Oh God, do Thou take us, purify us and make us Thy children in spite of our many blots. This is our humble prayer. Do Thou mercifully vouchsafe it!

Om ! Thath Sath !!

UPADESAMU.

I came here to lead these young men in devotion and in the worship of our common Father and to express a thought or two. For some time to come, we shall be parting company, each seeking his own rest and improvement along his own lines. The thought I would suggest is, therefore, a thought for the vacation, besides the thought of quiet rest and silent, patient and persevering industry.

There is a story. A man of position who had fallen into disfavour with the sovereign was imprisoned in a lofty tower the windows of which were so high that he

could not escape through them. He left behind a weeping wife, who felt the separation keenly and wept under the tower so loudly that the lamentations could be heard by the husband. He recognised the voice of his wife. He asked her not to weep, as such trials must come, but to apply some ghee just over the nose of a beetle and let it down the window after tying a thread to its leg. He also gave instructions to her to make the thread a little longer than the height of the window and to attach to its end a rope and afterwards a cord. By that means he reached the window and got himself down little by little. The whole difficulty was thus solved. Life is a great problem like that. The object of life is in itself, not elsewhere. It is placed there by the Divine Hand. As we pursue it, we go higher and higher ; and as we go higher and higher, we carry greater and greater responsibilities with us.

Life has three stages or points :—

1. There is a Heaven-ordained and instinctive desire to go higher and higher.

2. This instinct must be satisfied and cultivated, as it is placed there by the Divine Hand. The burden, not of philanthropy, but of divinity is thus laid upon us. There are some people to whom even a slight walk is a task. Unto a religious man the burden is a natural condition. As a man goes higher and higher along the path of Truth, this so-called burden increases. That was the case with Jesus and other great souls. Everyone that comes along the path of Truth has to bear the cross—not that cross 6 feet in length and 4 feet in breadth but that which is described in Tennyson's poem where Sir John Oldcastle, who was crucified for holding heretic doctrines, said, "Am I not a cross myself?" He who tries for the progress of the world must bear the cross, not in the sense of feeling it a burden, but in the sense of realising a responsibility on which he must be crucified and through which he must be regenerated.

3. He who progresses higher and higher miraculously in the direction of purifying and rectifying every one is the liberator of human

souls in the sense of vindicating the rights of human beings.

Let nobody think that Religion has come through the superstition, craftiness or the passing whim of any one. Religion is the instinct, imbedded in the heart of man, which cannot be shaken off. A certain person felt that there were serpents on his shoulders whispering in his ears. He could not take them off. He found that they were part and parcel of the body. They proved to be not serpents that hiss but angels that sing. He must not feel it as a burden or infliction but as a music in his ear, a delight in his heart. The music of life is always in the soul. Therefore, Religion is an integral part of man. Man is naturally set towards God as towards a magnet. Religion is not mere existence but the underlying stratum of existence. Religion is not a mere accomplishment but the food and drink of human nature. It is an instinct put there by the hand of God. In all ages and in all countries it has been so. There is a humorous story. A certain man wanted

to go out ; but there was something at the door that said, ' You must not go out.' After struggling for a time, he did go out by the window. So also Religion twists itself in so many forms and shapes, if only it is allowed to grow. A religious man will be found to be in richer sentiment. Where others pass by, he will be weeping with anguish. Where others take no notice, his heart will be rejoicing and dancing. Therefore, to such a man true Beauty is revealed. His conscience, again, is like a balance which catches even the slightest deviation from the path of morality. He is so full of God-consciousness, so much absorbed in the Reality, and so much taken up with the personal Vision, of God that unto him it is more than a logical sequence—even the one actual fact of his life. Take any person who is imbued with the sense of Religion. To him it is no longer a philosophy or a logic. A man who has felt God knows God. ' I know God. It is the first thing I know. If I do not know, I do not exist'. He looks at the fair earth. He sees the vast illimitable ocean. He views the lofty majestic

mountains. He hears the sweet strains of music. In all these he finds God. If God is not there, where else is He ? God is there, sustaining all and inspiring all. It so chanced that Othello and Desdemona arrived at the same place in different ships. She, hearing her husband's voice, cried out, "My fair warrior!" That was all. You may think that they met for the first time and so could not talk much. But it was far from that. It was the fulness of the heart that the conciseness and terseness of expression was due to. The heart was so focussed in that one word that other auxiliaries were unnecessary. It is ridiculous to ask whether there is God or not, if once we have actually seen and enjoyed the Personal God. Have we prayed to Him day after day and communed with Him in times of prosperity and in moments of affliction ? Is all that a fact ? If that is no fact, there is no fact in the world at all. Let us take the story of the two hermits who wanted oil for their lamps and for that purpose planted each an olive tree. One planted and said, "May it grow under God's care !" The

other planted and used to say, "O God, send down rain: it is very hot. Send heat: it is very chill." The first plant grew, fostered by God's light and fed by His providence. The second did not. Similarly, let Religion grow under God's care. Let no conventionalities be placed around it. Let there be no artificial restrictions. People talk of religious instruction in schools. That makes me smile. Let every teacher be a religious instructor himself, and that will create a religious spirit in the students. Man must have Religion as the aim of his life, 'This is mine. Everything is mine'. This is man's point of view. 'This is God-given. That is God-given.' This is the religious man's point of view. If such a man does any work, he does it, not as his but as God's. It is with reference to the Eternal Author of the universe that he does it. Morality will be sound in such a man. He will do and receive everything in the name of God. Such a man will look even at the sinner and say, 'Thou in whom God dwells, work up!' He will be a man of responsibility, not one of

anxiety. To this man every object will be dear, every avocation acceptable, because it is God-given, God-ordained. We live out in the mass, but he lives out individually in every section and in every element. His responsibilities are thus increased. As he progresses, he sees at once the emancipation of his soul and he becomes a beacon-light, a cheering example, to others. Others only say, 'we will be so centuries or decades hence.' The indwelling promise and the God-given capacity in every man is the same. A Buddha here and a Jesus there, a Sankara here and a Mahomet there—what are all these but so many splendid instances of the full growth of the luminary showing to us the possibility of our growth? You have the birth-right to grow by individual study and personal exertion. The capacities that are latent in you are mighty. The potency which is now dormant in you blazes forth when touched by the charming, the cheering, the invigorating wand of faith. Children of God, make yourselves worthy of the Divine Destiny that is in you. Let each one of us be precious unto

God, a glory unto the community and a true child of the mother-country. This is the thought that I wanted to suggest to you.

PRARDHANA.

We bow down to Thee, O Lord ! Do Thou strengthen us, purify us. May each one of us feel Thy Presence ! May Thy Law of Love be our Rule of Life ! May Thy Kingdom come ! May Thy blessings rest on all ! May Thy glory be proclaimed everywhere, by everybody, in thought, in word and in deed !

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

V

MARRIAGE* SERVICE.

(1916)

Om ! Prajapathaye Namah !!

Unto the great Unifier, unto the sublime Harmoniser, unto the holy Sanctifier, praise and glory, thanks and salutations ! Unto Him who has produced this united, harmonised and hallowed world out of nothing and nowhere ; unto the supreme Saviour ; unto the Effulgence that has shot forth light through darkness and life out of emptiness, praise and glory, thanks and salutations ! Unto Him who holds particles together as granite, who climbs as sap through all shrubs and trees, and produces freshness and fruit and beauty and joy ; unto Him who courses as life-blood through all creatures and sustains them daily, who increases and multiplies the many out of two and parcels out love and self-denial, who

* Of a ' child ' of the R. V. M. G. Ramarao Bahadur Orphange,

Cocanada.

knits together the stranger and the distant into the known and the near, the loved and the dear, and now as love, now as trust, holds together families and kindred; unto Him be praise and glory, thanks and salutations! Our God, our Lord, our Father, our Priest, our Friend, our Saviour, He is here, He has ordered and ordained this holy function. He has, through that common kindness and wide-spread affection which He has placed and planted in all hearts, invited us to this sacred and happy function. Blessed be His name! Not through man's management but through God's provision and design, this union is thus being happily made. Let us first realise, feel, feel, feel from our hearts that He is here with His order, His provision, His blessing, His full and holy sanction so sacred. Here we are, sisters and brothers, not to see fun, not to feel friendly joy, but to tremble with the idea and the knowledge that God has called us together on this occasion; and here we are because God has invited us. The Heavenly Father has sent us this blessed invitation; the Divine Mother has summoned

us to feel that we are the common children, brothers and sisters, of one family, as these two souls are being united. How solemn, how sacred, how truly valuable, how really important, this occasion! Not mere personal pleasure, not mere social company, not mere domestic convenience, has brought about this function, this holy union. We cannot say for how long a time God has meant this. He, who sees far into the future, must have meant and intended this before they were born, before we were born, before their and our ancestors were born. As one stream flows into another and gets fulness, as one force enters into another and gets strength, so one soul joins itself, is joined by God, with another and gets fulness and strength. Blessed be His name! May He fill these and all His humble servants and witnesses on this occasion with the sense of the solemnity, of the sacredness, of the supreme value, of the infinite blessing, of this happy, holy union!

Thou the Father of us all, we bless Thy name, we praise Thee and glorify Thee,

that Thou hast granted us this feast of the eye, this banquet of the heart, this bliss of the soul—this delight that thrills through sense and spirit! What are we, humble creatures, ignorant folk, that we should presume that we have brought about this union? This is wholly of Thy intending, of Thy making, of Thy sanctioning. Good God, kind Father, loving Mother, teach us to feel how sacred this union! Do Thou fill their hearts with pure, pure, pure love and affection, that they may be united and remain united for ever and ever and ever, through this life, through ages and eternity. Thou art eternal; and all love which is of Thy giving is bound to be eternal. Oh, fill us with the knowledge and the sense of the sacredness of the great blessing which Thou art granting to them. Do thou bless them. Do Thou remain with them always. By Thy mercy, with Thy sanction, under Thy inspiration, through Thy prompting, by Thy guidance, we seek now to give expression to this union, sealed, as we believe, by Thine own self.

They have asked me to bear my humble

witness to this holy function. Do Thou fill me with purity, devotion, truth, that by no fault, blemish or pollution of mine, this function may be touched or tainted ; but that it may all be pure, pure with crystalline purity, pure with flawless purity, pure with fleckless purity, pure as spotless sunshine, pure as clear air, pure as unpolluted water, pure as unblemished mind, pure as unsinching heart, pure as adoring soul, pure as deep and genuine love. May this whole sacrament and all its fruits be blessed ! We beseech Thee, Divine Mother, do Thou bless this ceremony.

My beloved friend and my darling child,

Now mine is the sweet pleasure and mine the keen pain—the pleasure that even to my desiring heart, even to my longing eye, is given to witness this blessed union ; and that natural human pain which cannot be kept down when, according to our human limitations, our human needs and wants, what is one's must become another's. Yet the good God, the merciful God, hallows the pleasures and sweetens the pain and makes

this rite so charming, so completely gratifying, that we cannot but praise Him and thank Him. My beloved friend and my darling child, I, in myself and as the humble representative of these friends that are met here, affectionately embrace you both together, and in that embrace commend this holy union which God himself has meant and ordained. My beloved friend and my darling child, you are seated face to face, heart opposed to heart, soul over against soul, publicly to declare and settle that you desire and wish—as long, through God's grace and prompting, you have desired and wished; and as, with God's holy name in your minds, in your hearts, in your voices, in your thoughts, in your intentions, you now proceed to tell me, in the presence of God and of these assembled elders, your desire and wish—to be thus sacredly and happily united. Do you make known your desire and intention?

My beloved friend, do you freely and by choice, out of love, with God as witness and these elders and friends as the sanctioning and blessing congregation, do you declare

that you have, freely and out of love and choice, chosen this darling child, Sreemathi—, to be your appointed wife and solemnly promise you will, prayerfully and depending upon God always, be to her a faithful and loving husband ?

(Bridegroom—‘Yes.’)

The bridegroom declares he has made up his mind. The Lord strengthen him and sustain him and bless him !

My darling child, do you say and declare that you have, freely and by your own choice, out of your own pure love, from the bottom of your heart, chosen my beloved friend, Sreeman—, to be by God’s blessing, under God’s guidance as witnessed by all elders, your appointed, beloved husband ? Do you promise that you will be to him a faithful, loving and wholly devoted wife for ever and ever ?

(Bride—‘Yes.’)

My child declares ‘Yes’. The Lord bless her ! The Lord’s best blessings be showered on her ! May she be, even like the great models for ever honoured in our country for

wife-like fidelity and love, a model and an ideal by God's grace !

Merciful Father ! We venture, humbly venture, to believe that in that short holy word ' yes ', Thy voice has spoken. Of all Thy gifts, no gift is so wonderful as this holy gift of speech. And of all words, no word is so forcible, so helpful, so truly invaluable, as the word ' yes '—that word which contains in it the essence of all consent, of all pledge, of all covenant, of all holy self-surrender. Do Thou bless that word and deeply implant and impress that word upon the hearts of these children, that it may shine within their hearts, before their eyes, in their home, throughout their life, in golden shining letters, for ever and ever commanding them to obey it, to live it.

We invoke Thy blessing upon this pledge, ' Yes ', Do Thou bless them, strengthen them, inspire them, guide them, that they may be true unto the happy, holy ' Yes ' of consent all their lives !

The Lord's choicest, happiest, holiest blessings be upon this union !

(Joining of hands between Bride and
Bridegroom.)

As you have joined hands, remember you have joined hearts, joined souls. You are united now ; and you can never, never, never think of separation. The Lord has united you, and the Lord will keep you united. The Lord's blessing be with you !

(Bridegroom's declaration.)

(Bride's declaration.)

(United prayer by both.)

The Lord hearken unto your united prayer and bless you both with His richest gifts and blessings !

(Exchange of garlands between Bride
and Bridegroom.)

The Lord bless this and make this the token of your self-surrendering love to her whom you have chosen as your sweet partner and co-pilgrim in life !

May the Lord bless this and make this the sign of your complete love, the expression of your complete obedience, to him whom you have, in the presence of God and these friends, chosen as your lord and husband, the master of your heart and soul !

My beloved friend and my darling child,

I perhaps make some mistake, commit some error, in addressing you two separately as my beloved friend and my darling child. Yes, it *is* a mistake, an error. You are no longer two but one, absolutely one, completely one, one, never to be separated. Your hearts have this day been made one : you are two halves of one complete whole.

Beloved friend, by God's grace, you are young, healthy, active, vigorous, with much hope and promise before you. And you should feel that for that hope, for that promise, for the fulfilment of that hope, for the realisation of that promise, God has given you a fresh and valuable increase of strength, of hope, of motive, of faith. Before

you were married, you were independent. Alone, you could say, 'I shall do what I like.' Married, you can only say, 'I shall do what is good for us both.' First, wife; then, other considerations, shall be the factors for deciding every course, taking every step. That must be your guiding principle. You have nobly, commendably, preferred to do the right thing and the good thing and have ennobled yourself. This noble action is a little seed sown in your heart and grown there to bear rich and happy fruit. Remember that hereafter this darling child is the queen of your heart. She has a *right* to rule there alone, unrivalled, unparalleled, as absolutely one and unique. In your eye, the most beautiful; to your heart, the most endeared; unto your soul, the most sacred; in your life, the most trusted; in your joys, the sweetest element; in your sorrows, the most powerful, she is your best friend, not given by man but granted by God. May you ever feel *that*!

My darling child—no longer your *Nayana's* child, your *Amma's* child, your *Rajah* *Nayana's* child, your *Rani Amma's* child, in

the sense of having been given as a gift and blessing unto another whom we have adopted as a child through our child. Above father, above mother, above your *Nayana*, above your Rajah Nayana, above your Amma, above your Rani Amma, is your husband to you. I say it, your *Nayana* says it, all say it. Remember *that* all the days of your life. If you have a list of friends, the name of...will be the first. If you have a list of those who do you good, ...'s name will be at the top. If you have a list of those whom you may trust as your well-wishers, there will be no equal to...He is the best of your friends, the truest of your friends, the dearest of your friends: he is your *pranapathi*. As the body without life, so is the wife without the husband. Cocanada, your home, is now transferred to Mangalore, your home. Cocanada will always be your home; but a sweeter home, a happier home, a holier home will be—Mangalore. And there, show by your life that you have been a blessing. It is painful for your *Nayana*; but we are glad we are sending you to one who will be more than equal to us all. First, God;

then...; let that be your thought always.

And may God bless you both !

I will not say anything about your after-life. Joys will come. Sorrows will come. But joys will be joys as they are shared together ; and sorrows will cease to be sorrows as you are with each other. So long as you stand by each other, no sorrow will be too much for you to bear. Begin the day by sitting together and praying together and taking a new pledge for the day. Close the day by sitting together and thanking God for another day of united and happy life. Let every day thus be a day of marriage, of fresh marriage, of fresh joy hymeneal. Let God be your guide and be you justly devoted to God. May your home be happy ; may your relations and friends help you ; may your path of life be smooth and pleasant ; may God's light shine on your path ; may God's love make you pure and happy ! May you be blessed !

Thou *Paramapitha*, *Jagathpitha*, the Father of the Universe, *Jaganmathu*, the Mother of

the Universe ! Here are Thy children, seated on Thy own lap, within the embrace of Thy own love. Do Thou bless them. We know—why presume to ask ?—that Thou wilt bless them. Teach them the value and sanctity of this pledge, this covenant of holy, sacred union, that it may at the same time be a blessing for the immense happiness of both. Teach them to so act and live that they may be each other's blessing. May they grow more and more in love and devotion, enriching and sweetening each other ! May they live in joy as co-pilgrims, as fellow-worshippers, labouring for the spread of Thy truth ! Make their days many and rich in happiness. May they be a model of family love, domestic peace and purity, glorifying Thee all their lives ! This is our humble supplication. Do thou confirm and justify it with Thy own blessing. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever !

Om Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Om Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Om Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

The Lord's mercy alone availeth !
 The mercy of the Lord alone availeth !
 Naught but the mercy of the Lord availeth !
 The Lord of Mercies be for ever blessed !

Sisters and Brethren, this happy and holy ceremony has now come to a close. There is none too good for others' prayers, none too rich for others' blessings. I beseech you all to give these children your devoutest prayers and choicest blessings. And when your prayers and blessings are united, He who is the Supreme Receiver of all prayers and Sovereign Vouchsafer of all blessings will bestow upon them the fullest benefit of your prayers and blessings. I therefore beseech your devoutest prayers and choicest blessings on these dear children.

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

HYMN—*Ninugoniyadaga nerchu nevadu bhuvi* (Telugu)

VI
SERVICE :
GLORIA IN EXCELCIS.
(1915)

HYMN—*Prabhu amaro priya amaro paramadhanahey*
(Bengali)

Unto Him our Lord, unto Him the supreme Spirit, unto Him our beloved God, unto Him our eternal Repose and Stay and Strength, unto Him our infinite Providence, unto Him our Companion and Guide, unto Him our Consoler and Comforter, unto Him our Lover and Friend, unto Him our Fund of joy and Store of bliss, we render on this auspicious morning our humble salutations, our lowly obeisances, our reverent prostrations. Him we adore all the days of our life. Him we adore with the longing reach of our souls. Him we adore with the eager yearning of our desires. Him we adore with the indescribable joy of our hearts. Him we adore with the reverent submission of our judgments. Him we adore with the aspiring outlook of our ideals. Him we adore with the craving, the unquenchable thirst, of our spirits for

purity and righteousness. Him we adore with the devotion, the rapturous adoration, of our souls. From Him we derive all that makes for progress. In Him we seek all that conduces to happiness. To him we owe all that helps and guides unto purity, truth and love. In Him we find the delight of our days and the peace of our nights. Unto Him we tend along the whole pilgrimage of our lives as pious devotees, as dutiful servants, as trusting children, as singing and rejoicing worshippers. Him, on this auspicious occasion, we glorify, we praise, we adore, we rejoice in. How merciful, how loving, how ceaselessly benevolent, how eternally care-taking and fostering is He! Thus we are again and again embraced to His bosom, in His arms. For, worship is this gathering, into the Mother's arms, of loving, trusting, hopeful, implicitly confiding children. Here we come, not to analyse, not to scrutinise, not to philosophise, not to generalise, not vaguely to murmur our discontent or grumble over our grievances, no, not even to burn the incense of flattering praise—we come wholly and solely to cast

ourselves into the arms of our Divine, Benign Mother. Blessed is She that She has gathered us once again into Her loving arms! The wearied child, the frightened child, the buoyant child, the apparently rebellious child, the truly loving child, all leap into the arms of the common Mother—one silently to repose on the bosom of Love, another timidly to cling to the arms of Support, another boisterously to rejoice on the lap of Bliss, another tremulously to lie prostrate before the feet of Forgiveness, another innocently to look up and smile at the blessed countenance of Beauty. Thus gathered in the arms, on the lap, upon the bosom, of our Benign Mother, let us rejoice that we have this occasion to render thanks that unto us is granted this sacred, blessed opportunity; and let us seize, snatch, even while we may, all the joy, all the strength, that is inherently possible in this loving contact, holy communion, with our Beloved God.

Thou the adorable One, the ever-adored One, the loving One, the ever-beloved One,

the Lord of our hearts, the Maker of our life, the Author of our destiny, the Care-taker of our days, the Definer of our separate and united activities, the Fulfiller of our humble and lowly endeavours, the Realiser of our sweet, chaste, lofty desires, the Accomplisher of our eternal purposes, the Embodiment of our divinest ideals, the Goal and Destination of our eternal pilgrimage! We bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee, that even unto us, the vermin of the earth, insignificant lowly motes in Creation, that even unto us Thou hast vouchsafed this supreme privilege of speaking directly to Thy Motherly Heart, ever throbbing, ever feeling, ever tenderly, affectionately solicitous for each one of us. How mercifully, ceaselessly, vigilantly watchful Thou art over each one of us! Every day, every hour, every minute, we feel the touch—the tender touch, the invigorating touch, the hallowing touch, the sanctifying touch—of Thy very self with our lowly spirits. Never left alone without a telling, direct proof of Thy immediate presence with, and personal interest in,

each one of us, we always and everywhere realise how intimate Thou art. With every breath, with every beat of the pulse, with every whisper, with every flutter in the air, with every note of song, every glow of hope, every quickening impulse of righteous purpose and pious resolution, Thou revealest Thyself unto us as the Eternal Companion of each soul, checking the forward, training the obstinate, cheering the despondent, urging the sluggish, blessing the faithful, rejoicing in the holy. Thou art with us always and everywhere. With every step planted on the firm ground ; with every look cast on this vast and glorious creation ; with every ray of light entering the eye ; with every significant sound reaching the ear ; with the rich wealth of colour and radiance, of music and fragrance, that the world so inexhaustibly abounds in, we behold Thy glory without and around us. With every pang of writhing contrition ; with every glow of trusting hope ; with every new revelation of Thy marvellous truth, homely yet saving ; with every comfort that comes in the hour of sorrow ; with every

inspiration vouchsafed in the hour of bewilderment; with every strength graciously granted in the hour of frailty and weakness; with every companionship vouchsafed in direst solitude and loneliness, we receive Thy merciful gifts, priceless bounties, inestimable blessings, every hour of our lives. In the beauty that emerges in the charms of nature; in the might that is revealed in the immovable mountain and the absorbing ocean; in the irresistible tornado; in the unconquerable strength of the sun above and the earth below; in the mighty sweep of planets ranging through immensities of space, yet poised in marvellous accuracy and marshalled with unfailing precision; in the mysteries of nature revealed unto the searching inquirer in the surprises of benevolent providence, in the marvels of ingenious adaptation, in the wealth of inexhaustible fertility, in the accuracy of periodic certainty with the balance of strength set off against skill, and wisdom rewarded in sure vision and clear proof—in all these we behold Thy own direct self working out the salvation of the world. With eyes

never winking, with heart never lacking in sympathy, with arms never tired in benevolence, with vigilance never wanting in wisdom, Thou art at the entrance, the gate, of the heart of each one of Thy children. We open the door, and there we behold Thee ; we welcome Thee in, and we see Thee enthroned. We adore Thee with the true love of our silent reverence, and Thou spellest our secret desires. Thus, within and without, seen and felt, known and enjoyed, honoured and adored, obeyed and, above all, most willingly and trustfully confided in, Thou art our Supreme Companion, Guide and Strengthen-
 er. The valiant in the hero, the humane in the philanthropist, the trustful in the martyr, the serene in the sage, the growing in the child, the rejuvenating in the sick, the hopeful in the sorrowing, the struggling in the sinning, the aspiring in the lowly, the pure in the pious, the divine in the holy, the enduring in the patient—Thou art the Essence, the inmost Spirit, the eternal Verity, the imperishable Reality, the irrepressible Certitude in one and all. And we adore Thee thus as the

Lord of the universe, as the Commander of all creation, as the Saviour of all souls, as the Bliss-giver of all adorers! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy Name! The Wisdom in the world's records, the Truth in the world's discoveries, the Fact in the world's deeds, the Hope in the world's endeavours, the Love in the world's harmonising and fraternising activities, the Wealth in the world's industries, the Joy in the world's services, the Peace of all homes in the world, the Delight of all adorers in human kind—Thou art the inner Essence, the vital and sanctifying Soul of the universe. The Law that sways and sustains, the Light that illumines and interprets, the Wisdom that plans and designs, the Power that guides and controls, the Providence that caters and fosters, the Love that cherishes and saves—Thou art All-in-all unto us. We praise Thee, we sing Thy name, we glorify Thy greatness, and we everlastingly rest grateful and adoring in Thy arms of peace, of love, of holiness. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

Our own God, the God of each one of us! Happy as it is to adore Thee as the Universal Father, Protector and Saviour, yet Thou art the Beloved one of each one of us. We seek to love Thee, to adore Thee, as the Indwelling, Personal God of each one of us. Plastic, elastic, adaptable, tolerant, sympathetic, keen in perception, prompt in resource, lenient in sympathy, unsparing in generosity, inexhaustible in love—how Thou conformest to the ways and wishes, adoptest Thyself to the purposes and demands, of each one of us! Unto the hungry Thou gettest food. Unto the lonely Thou grantest companionship. Unto the young Thou art the jubilant comrade. Unto the old Thou art the reassuring associate. Unto the male Thou art the strong, sturdy, self-dedicating heroism. Unto the female Thou art the sweet, tender, self-dedicating love. Unto the child Thou art the pure, innocent, trusting attachment. Unto the sage Thou art the piercing, quickening truth. Unto saint Thou art the perfect, immaculate holiness. Unto *me* Thou art all in all—in the study, my teacher; at the table, my

mother feeding me ; on the bed, my mother
 lulling me to sleep ; at work, my inspirer and
 guide ; in company, the harmoniser and
 enlivening sanctifier ; in solitude, the serene,
 meditative spirit hovering over me and
 throbbing in me ; standing on earth, the
 firmness below ; looking up, the radiance and
 the glow ; looking around, the charm and
 colour ; brooding within, the gospel and the
 beatitude ; listening within, the oracle and
 the inspiration ; silently reposing, the re-
 freshing slumber and the rejuvenating rest.
 What are Thou not unto me ? To the heart-
 ache, the soothing balm ; to the soul-throb,
 the comforting, reassuring healer—Thou
 art unto me a treasure past all calculation,
 a wealth beyond all estimation. Literally,
 truly and verily, Thou art the nerve, the
 vitality of my body, as truly as Thou art the
 strength and comfort of my heart, the peace
 and joy of my soul, the truth and righteous-
 ness of my whole aspiration. Thou art my
 own beloved God. Too many to be counted,
 too rare to be estimated, too valuable to be
 appraised, have been Thy gifts unto me. The

sun Thy gift ; the moon Thy gift ; the stars Thy sovereign gifts ; the breath, the sight, the power to think, the power to feel, the power to wish and will—every organ and every sense, every power and every faculty—all are Thy gifts. Starting as a speck, growing as a miracle, developing as a purpose, ranging forth into infinite space on the wing of Thy inspiration, I have been, every minute, a living proof of Thy own divine glory. And as for these, Thy beloved children, my beloved brethren, Thou alone knowest how they are grateful, how they are reverent and truly adoring in their spirit, how they feel, as Thou alone knowest, that they owe all unto Thee. They know how all that is valuable has come of Thee—the father that protects ; the mother that cherishes ; the brother or sister whose very smile is a twinkle of celestial light ; companions and friends, the duplicates of their hope, faith, trust and joy ; teachers, the humble, loyal, trustful exponents of divine truth and wisdom ; every one giving his best, imparting his wisest, conveying his noblest, transmitting

his most immortal part; all the accessories and accomplishments of life from air, water and food up to truth, love, purity and grace. We all owe our all unto Thee. Purchased for no price, compensated with no return, aye, at times not even acknowledged with gratitude, often forgotten with indifference, Thy blessing come yet unto us as sure as the promise of the noble, as true as the pledge of the faithful, as plentiful as the bounty of the liberal, as precious as the gift of the loving, as sanctifying as the blessing of the holy. And we render thanks unto Thee for all this—for the long past which Thou hast mercifully stored for the good of the present; for the wide present which Thou hast wisely designed for the myriad activities of man; for the illimitable future which Thou shalt bountifully open up for the progress of the race. How can we render thanks unto Thee for all this? In the crest of the earth, in the halo of light around it, in the breath of air embracing it, in the aroma and fragrance making it a shrine, we behold the innumerable tokens of Thy love

and goodness making it a divine blessing. All, all tell the endless tale of Thy mercy unto each one of us. The senses attuned to the objects around—the colour pleasing the eye, the fragrance blessing the corresponding sense, every sound attuned to the harmony of the ear—all suggestions from without flowing in to be harmonised in the heart, how we stand in a store-house of mercy so ceaselessly and abundantly showered on each one of us! Diverse in language, similar in thought, akin in sentiment, united in aspiration, harmonised in endeavour, tending incessantly to the one goal of Thy glory, how we feel the tie of fraternity, the bond of brotherhood, that Thou hast shaped and designed for each one of us within the mansions of Thy own fatherly mercy! East and West, irreconcilable in man's narrowness, are harmonised into one holy shrine in Thine all-inclusive catholicity; North and South, poles asunder in man's puny calculation, are shaped into one wholeness in Thine all-embracing purpose. We feel that, as Thou art One, Thou hast designed all humanity

to be one, meant all this universe to be one, framed all laws to be merged in Thy supreme law of love, reconciled all differences in the beauty of variety, in the harmony of richness and freshness. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name! The gospels of the world the chapters of Thy holy message; the prophets of the world the message-bringers of Thy mercy; the sages of the world the crystals through which Thy light passes to the larger humanity; the toilers of the world the caterers and purveyors of Thy benevolence; the sorrowing and suffering ones of the world the vindicators of Thy compassion; the leaders of the world the finger-marks, the index-fingers, of Thy Light—all, all are instances of Thy glory and power. Blessed, blessed, be blessed Thou! The material subserving the mental, the mental subserving the moral, the moral subserving the spiritual, the spiritual subserving the eternal—how these make a glorious gradation, a holy hierarchy, of the perfections of humanity in the sonship of divinity! For all these we render thanks unto Thee. Blessed,

blessed, blessed be Thou! Each one of us, struggling to be free and taught to be dependent, bounding up to be above laws but brought down to the lowly ground of law in love, seeking the satisfaction of self but led to the inestimable truth that the fullest realisation of self is in selfless service and selfless love—how each one of us is always at school, always at home, trained, cherished, taught, pleased, instructed, blessed, built up and loved! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name! The beauty that reveals itself now in the starry sky and again on the emerald meadow; the song that now sings the child to recreative sleep and now rouses the hero into divine enthusiasm; the wisdom that now shoots through the lowly doors of the humble and the faithful and now overtops the farthest heights of eager enquiry, of searching scrutiny; the love that, like a holy alchemy, transforms the base into the noble, the impure into the pure, the weak into the strong—all these are Thy own gifts, and we bless Thee for them all. History Thy record, poetry Thy praise, philosophy Thy studied

truth, religion Thy realised love, science Thy assured wisdom, and, above all, trust and faith Thy accepted bonds of affinity—we render thanks unto Thee for all these. The busy street is Thy retreat. The quiet nook of solitary prayer, the silent bower of solitary love, the high watch-tower of wisdom, the lowly cot of silent orrow and patient suffering—these are Thy favourite haunts. We adore Thee in the tabernacle of this earth. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name!

Thou the ever-beloved, all-loving, ever-blissful, all-blessing, true God, beloved God of my heart, of my soul, of my home, of my whole existence, of my whole round of life! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever.

And is this all from Thee? Is this all from Thy bounty? Oh! my God, ever I am Thy beggar: I am Thy beggar-man: I am the beggar depending on Thee and rejoicing in Thy bounty: I am dependent on Thee: I am dependent on Thee. I know no other strength, I know no other resource, I look up to no higher,

I embrace no other companion. I find my all in Thee. This is my badge of service, my star of distinction, my crown of glory, my sceptre of strength ; and I bless Thee for it. Thy blessings, innumerable and invaluable, come unto me unmasked, stay unnoticed, serve unrecognised, bless unappreciated, and endure for ever unconcerned on my part. But is this all Thy gift? Is this all come to me? Is this all a vision, a descent, an inflow? Can there be no return, no ascent, no home-going back on my part? What can I give Thee? What offering can I bring unto Thee? What dare I place at Thy footstool as a present, as a humble tribute? My beloved God! The child receives the blessing and comes back only to give a kiss. The child receives its toys and comes back only to show them with dust and dirt on. The child receives the strengthening embrace and looks up and smiles. The child receives the fostering care and, with closed eyes, feels the gratitude. Thus I come to Thee, my own beloved Mother! I come, not for any boon or blessing, but to

feel warm in Thy presence and to show that I am fully alive to, and heartily thankful for, Thy gifts. The devotion of my heart, the gratitude of my heart, the thankfulness of my heart, the trustful, confiding belief of my heart, the hopeful, cheerful love of my heart, is my present unto Thee! I know unto the mother it is the broken toys, the innocent smile, the inarticulate words, the unexpressed love, that are dear! Do Thou accept this, my humble tribute—in itself worth nothing, less than nothing; yet, for my sake, unto Thy heart dear; under Thy blessing, rich past calculation. My contrite heart, my unrealised hopes, my unfulfilled aspirations, my broken resolutions, my discomfited efforts, my pious wishes, my humble and frail endeavours, my lowly but true aspirations—these I bring before Thee. As the mother makes the child feel that its smile is returned with the motherly smile, not because it is deserved, but because it is received, welcomed and blessed, do Thou accept this humble, lowly gift; do Thou bless it and make it a blessing unto me and unto others. Words

incoherently spoken, thoughts spontaneously felt, feelings and sentiments voluntarily expressed—may all be received at Thy sacred throne, not for their intrinsic value, but as the chosen receptacles of Thy grace and the select specimens of Thy mercy! Do Thou receive this humble tribute of Thy timid child and sorrowing servant; and bless it so that it may become a fruitful source, an abundant harvest, of mercy unto all! Oh, my God! My body I render unto Thee that it may be engaged in Thy service. My mind I offer unto Thee that it may be employed for the propagation of Thy truth. My heart I dedicate unto Thee that it may, by Thy mercy, be turned into the throne of love. My soul I wholly surrender unto Thee that, through Thy grace, it may be made a shrine of Thy spirit. Do Thou in Thy love, by Thy grace, receive this lowly tribute. Bless it and appropriate it unto Thy service and make this a blessing unto all. Blessed, blessed, blessed by Thy name!

Oh Thou! All-merciful, All-loving God!
May the blessings that I receive teach me to

bless others; the joy that is granted unto me impel me to rejoice in others! May the truth that is vouchsafed unto me propel me, in its turn, to supplicate truth for all! In Thee we are all one. . Around Thee we are a family. Adoring Thee, we are a congregation. Serving Thee, we are a holy army of love and mercy. Rejoicing in Thee, we are a fraternity eternally bound together in loving and holy kinship. Thou the Giver of all good! We supplicate Thy blessings on all—upon the crawling worm, upon the soaring bird, upon the tiny animalcule, upon the gigantic and awe-inspiring creature in creation. We supplicate Thy blessings upon the sinning and the erring, the sorrowing and the suffering, the cruel and the hateful, the combative and the quarrelsome, the ignorant and the unillumined; upon those who seek darkness and abide in death—upon, all, and ourselves amongst them. We supplicate Thy blessings upon the humble and the lowly, upon the innocent and the harmless, upon the pure and the spotless, upon the true and the faithful, upon the good and the

benevolent, upon the loving and the serviceable, upon the holy and the righteous. We invoke Thy rich blessing upon all. Do Thou in Thy mercy grant that little by little, some day, some distant day, it may be unto me, even unto me, a penitent sinner, vouchsafed to receive the blessing of the good and the faithful, of the true and the loving, of the pure and the holy. We invoke Thy blessing on the reminiscences of the past, on the activities of the present, on the possibilities of the future. We invoke Thy blessing upon all eternal purposes embosomed in Thee and tender our united and heart-felt gratitude and love and offer our thankful blessings at Thy sacred throne and supplicate Thy gracious acceptance of them.

And as we tender these, do Thou mercifully put into us the strength and the resolution to do Thy will. Do Thou cleanse us of impurities. Do Thou eliminate from us the processes of selfishness, self-seeking, self-assertion, self-aggrandisement, pride, greed, lust, avarice, ambition and envy. Do Thou encourage in us the processes of truth,

sympathy, harmony, purity, love, benevolence, admiration, worshipful reverence and admiring trust. Do Thou open in us a desire for Thy truth, awaken in us a resolve to render Thy service. Unseal the springs of love and sow the holy seeds of faith. Disclose in us the true, real secret facts of life, so that we may, by Thy mercy and under Thy guidance, distinguish fact from fiction, the real from the imaginary, the enduring from the transient, the loveable from the indifferent, and the godly from the worldly, that thus we may ever aspire after, seek, endeavour for, the good and the true and the pure and the lovely and the holy. Do Thou in Thy mercy grant that all those terrible differences, destructive hatreds and unbridled passions that tear humanity into factions and irreconcilable enmities—grant that all these may be lulled and hushed into peace and harmony—not the politic harmony of mutual profit and mutual praise, but the true harmony of mutual service and mutual love. Do Thou grant, oh merciful One! that all pest of hatred, all touch of unholy passions,

all visitations of sickness, strife, suffering of every kind, may be wholly weeded out, completely wiped out, that this, Thy fair earth, may be the abode of peace, the paradise of purity and the heaven of love; that thus Thy true kingdom of spirit may be established and all be gathered together into one household of universe as Thy children, praising, adoring, singing and loving Thee. Thy truth sway the world, Thy love be the sovereign of the world, Thy holiness be the quickening spirit, the inner life, of the world! This is our humble, devout supplication and prayer. Do Thou bless it, do Thou bless it, do Thou bless it. May we all bless Thee with our thoughts, our words, our deeds! And thus, we blest in Thee and Thou blest of us, may this universe abide in truth, peace, love and righteousness now and for ever!

Om !

Brahma Krupahi Kevalam !

Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

VII
SERVICE:
GOD IN ALL.
(1916)

HYMN—*Enthati Karunyude Paramathmudu* (Telugu)

Praise and glory, thanks and salutations, our whole-hearted, whole-souled reverence and obeisance, unto that all-merciful, all-clement, all-tender, all-loving God whom we have come together to sing as the *Saranagathaposhana*! My own dear, beloved God—merciful, loving, compassionate, clement God—unto me the Saviour! What other opening, what other channel, what other path, what other avenue, is there but to call Thee *Saranagathaposhana*? Thou the Care-taker, the Protector, the ever-vigilant, watchful Father, the ever-tender, nursing, compassionate, loving Mother! Here we are, in this place, sanctified, hallowed, by the hearty devout singing of Thy dear, holy name.

This is Thy shrine, Thy own chosen temple, Thy holy, inner tabernacle. We are here to adour, praise and glorify Thee and pour forth the tribute of the grateful delight of our hearts to Thee. And yet we know not how to do it. We lack the faith, we want the trust, we are without the hope, we are devoid of the experience, the thrilling experience, which alone can unseal the secrets of the heart, lay bare the innermost longings of the soul; and yet we have been taught to sing '*Thiramuga nammina thiruga ranivvade!*' Yes; that we know. It needs only trust to cry out, 'Father, Father! Father!' Thou art here and now, even here and now. Thy heart pre-^{ses}eth upon us; Thy spirit embraceth each one of us, and pervadeth our spirits. We have only to trust, to confide, to believe. to say, 'Thou *art*, Thou really livest, truly revealest Thyself.'

For want of a little whisper of good cheer and hope from Thee, I am starved, roasted in the fire of my own iniquity, blown out in the tempest of my own passion, caught and engulfed in the whirl-wind of my own unbrid-

led, heedless, wanton desires. Oh, beloved God! The vilest sinner is dear unto Thee. The lowliest, the murkiest, the dirtiest of souls is of Thee, Thine offspring. Do Thou deign to reach Thy hand to lift this sinner up. Thou art the dear God, the near God, the ever-present, the ever-loving God, the ever-true, ever-faithful, ever-merciful, ever-compassionate God. Oh! Thou art so precious, so incalculably precious, so immeasurably good, so inexhaustibly kind, so untireably patient, so indefatigably solicitous of our good. Oh Father, where can I fetch words from to express this throbbing, this agitated, this tortured heart's thanks and praise? May my silent, humble, lowly, unspoken but *felt* praise be acceptable unto Thee! This ragged, shabby, torn, dirty, filthy heart I bring as an offering unto Thy altar. Oh, may it be acceptable of Thee! Thou all-immaculate, pure, spotless, blotless, absolutely holy, radiant with the lustre and glory of sanctity! Yes, yes, yes! Do Thou quench, drown, baptise my dirty black heart in Thy holy lustre, that I may be absolutely mutat-

ed, transmuted, transformed, wholly re-formed in Thy spirit! May my heart be an offering, a thanks-offering, a humble, reverent tribute of gratitude unto Thee! Oh, my God! This worship, this privilege of adoring Thee, this blessing of praying unto Thee and calling Thee my Father—how supreme it is! Do I realise its worth and thank Thee adequately? This privilege, this blessing, this rapturous, beatific ecstasy, this translating, transporting thrill and throb of worship—this is a token, a proof, an expression, a most convincing evidence, of Thy concern and solicitude for me and eager interest in my welfare. To grant me life, to surround me with all that contributes to my activity and peace in life—that, that is mercy. But this is Grace—to come to me, to abide with me, to be near me, to be needful of me, to be always indwelling in me, to abide in my murky heart, to make Thy shrine in my sin-tainted soul, to accept my broken words, to be pleased with my frail, fragile, sin-laden hopes and intentions. This is Grace. Thou Sovereign of sovereigns, unto Thee alone is given to be

so gracious, wholly, gratuitously gracious, asking no return, testing no merit, waiting for no call, ever urging, impelling, attracting, inducing, drawing, gathering even this sinner unto Thee, My Father, my Father, my Father! Heed not these broken words. Only know the heart is aching, the yearning soul is on the rack of disappointed expectation. Beloved God, beloved God, we want Thee, we cannot do without Thee, *Saranagathaposhana*, Thou only Protector, Thou alone art competent to be the Protector of those who seek refuge in Thee—Protector of the unprotected, Parent of the orphaned, Consoler of the bereaved, Healer of the diseased, Helper of the helpless, Strengtheners of the feeble, Uplifter of the prostrate, Sanctifier of the penitent. My beloved God, Thou art truly and verily my own dear personal God, as Thou art the dear personal God of each one of these, my heart's brethren.

We are here, Thy children, to worship Thee, not for routine, not for pastime, not to pay a debt, not to return thanks, but to receive and imbibe Thy love, to be transmuted.

into Thy holiness, to be enclosed and permeated by Thy glory. Thou art the Father of our spirits. We come to adore Thee as our Father. Peace, joy, consolation, happiness to touch Thee, to feel Thee, to look upon Thee, to receive Thy smile, to hear Thy whisper, to realise Thy life surging, pervading, inflowing into, each one of us! That is our blessedness, our salvation. We are come here to adore Thee, to attune our hearts, to address our thoughts, to attract our souls unto Thee, that we may wholeheartedly worship Thee.

READINGS—Maharshi Devendranath Tagore's
Autobiography,

Ch. XX (The True Yogi), last 3 paras.

Thou art the Supreme One, the Eternal One, the Omnipotent One, the absolutely Perfect One, the All-including, the All-pervading, the All-transcending One. Unto Thee there is no beginning. Unto Thee there is no end. Thou wert before the beginning. Thou shalt be after the end. Beginningless, End-

less, Eternal ; Everlasting 'Now' ; All-inclusive 'Here' ; All-unifying Truth ; All-inspiring Wisdom ; All-embracing Love ; All-enrapturing Beauty ; All-hallowing Holiness—Thou art the Perfect One. We dare not approach Thee. Unto us is not permissible even to think of Thee as the absolutely Perfect One. Thought is repelled.. Imagination falls flat and helpless. Meditation cannot dive deep enough. Song cannot soar high enough. Oh, to think of Thee as the All-pervading, Absolute, Indivisible *Ekamevadwithecyam* ! Not accessible to thought, not realisable by the sense of perception, not available even to the poet's song or the painter's art ; yet available to the devout heart, yet ever-accessible to the worshipper's love, yet ever-ready and at hand for the sinner's appeal, yet ever directly and immediately appreciating the trusting child's lisping soul—Thou the adoring, Thou the adorable ; Thou the worshipful, Thou the worshipable, Thou all-adored all-worshipped One—Thou art our own God, though beyond all possible reach of our conception. The little child trusts in the

father and is thus able to know the father. The little child confides in the mother and is thus able to know the mother. The humble disciple trusts in the preceptor and is thus able to know the preceptor. Thus Thou art my own Father, Mother, Preceptor, All-in-all. They, the wise ones, call Thee by diverse names. Oh, have I the wisdom thus to call Thee? Nay, nay, nay. I know nought but the language of the heavy-hearted sinner. I know only the language of the anguish-tortured sinner. I call Thee my Saviour, my own Saviour. That is all that I need. That is enough for me. Truly and verily, Thou art my own personal Saviour. Fire may burn. The elements may rage. Darkness may envelope. Mists may gather. Tempests may lower. Earth may gape open and swallow up. Yet Thou art my Saviour. I adore Thee as my Saviour, as I trust and confide in Thy Mercy. As the Saviour, Thou givest even unto this sinner to see how great and glorious, how truly loveable and really charming Thou art. Thou dost not come to the sinner to rebuke him; Thou comest to pity—

not to find fault but to soothe, not with the frown of an offended judge but with the look, the pittyng look, the sorrowful look, the compassionate look, of the Mother that feels. Oh, what mother can feel as Thou dost feel? To me, the sinner, Thou comest with the feeling look of the Mother of mothers; and lo, I behold Thy beauty and charm, the beauty of Holiness, the charm of Love, beautiful as Holiness and charming as Love. Verily and truly, Thou art *Sivam*, Goodness itself. What a stale word is goodness! Milk, nectar, ambrosia, *amritham*, kindness, love, providence—frail, feeble, faltering, stale words, these! Can they, can they touch the surface, the top-surface, of the Ocean of Thy love? Has it a bottom? Who can fathom it? Has it a shore? Who can survey it? It springs within springs, ever welling up and surging up and inundating us with the nectar of Thy love. Oh! Beloved God! Truly and verily and surely, Thou art the God of Love. My own Mother! Thy milk of kindness, Thy honey of love, Thy nectar of mercy, has been feeding me incessantly. It has been feeding

me. It fed me before my human mother knew me. It will continue ever to feed me. Who can feed my heart, who can feed my soul, who can supply the food I need as a child of God, but Thyself? Thou *Amritham*, nectar, ambrosia, celestial nourishment, heavenly manna that feedeth the soul, nourisheth the heart! Thou God of Love! Thanks, thanks, thanks; thanks, thanks, thanks; whole-hearted thanks unto Thee.

Oh! Thy Love is of Wisdom. Even as Thou art compassionate, Thou showest Thyself to be loving. Even as Thou art loving, Thou disclovest Thyself to be wise; absolutely wise, dispassionately wise; anticipatively wise; eternally wise, forecasting the future, anticipating the needs, supplying the desires, tending only to improve me; refusing to grant those that harm me; impelling me to seek that which benefits me, surrounding me with a whole world as a training-ground, a teaching-school, an infinite object-lesson; calling forth every power, training every faculty, turning every opportunity to good account;—wise, holy, loving, all because,

wholly because, Thou art such a Father and will not leave me alone. Thou hast eternally drawn this child to Thee! Oh! How compassionate! Thou the Father; me the child—how, how extremes meet, how extremes meet! All-holy the Father, all-unholy the child! All-wise the Father, all-stupid the child! All-loving the Father, all-selfish the child! All-reality the Father, all dream and name the child! How extremes meet! Yet, oh God, what art Thou if Thou art not the reconciler, the harmoniser, of extremes? Within, yet without; transcendent, yet immanent; individual, yet universal; personal, yet cosmic; ever-growing as revealed to us, yet ever the same as contained in Thyself; all-radiant, engulfing all darkness, yet all-veiled before all proud, hollow philosophies—Thou art the Harmoniser, Unifier, the only Reality—*Satyam, Gnanam, Anantham, Sivam, Sundaram*. All-in-all God! Blessed, blessed blessed be Thou. I find my all in Thee. What a wealth, what a blessing, how abundant, how readily available, seeking no return, setting no price on Thy gifts, showered, poured

forth in endless abundance even upon this hollow head, this vile heart, this tainted soul! All the drops of all the showers in Thy creation—they cannot together outnumber the tale of Thy mercies even unto me. The sands of the sea-shore, the atoms of the air, the stars in the heavens, the grass-blades on the earth, the particles that constitute the globe—can they, can they serve as a single bead-roll to tell out the tale of Thy mercies? No, no. Every drop of blood in my veins, though coined into a holy text in praise of Thee, could not go beyond the opening hymn. My beloved God, my own God, with all my heart, with all my soul, with my whole-hearted, whole-souled gratitude, I render thanks unto Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name. *Ekamevadwitheeyam, Ekamevadwitheeyam.* All-including, All-pervading, Thou art one with me; we are all one in Thee; with each one of us Thou art one. Thou art one, Thou art one in us, around us. Beloved God, blessed, blessed be Thy name!

HYMN—*Manaka daya gavave thantri* (Telugu)

Art Thou really everywhere? As we have sung, is it unto us a seen, known experience that Thou art the the Catterer, the Purveyor, the Provider, the Supplier, the Plentiful Giver of all blessings unto all creatures? Is it true that Thou art there, as we have sung, '*Cheemathudiga nellajeevulanu*,' feeding all that swarm of ants in unbroken lines of active life, each carrying its grain of food? Is it Thou that has placed the food in their mouths? Art Thou there? That clod of earth which breaks up and crumbles to pieces with throbbing life, as the seed bursts into the seedling—art Thou there? The rain which, as it descends, travels through miles of space, first collected, then drifted, then dispersed—a whole system of economy, of production and distribution; supplying, providing for, each need and want—art Thou there? The little kid gambolling around its mother, look answering look, bleat echoing bleat, heart pulsating with heart—art Thou there? Art Thou there in the little fly jubilant in its own activity,

fitting from flower to flower, here sucking fragrance, there sucking honey—art Thou there? Those songs of the grove, varied and harmonised, each little natural singer pouring forth its own inner happiness in carols, in melting strains—in those songs and in that grove, dost Thou reside? In that ceaseless flow of life and love, that crystal brook springing in the heart of mother earth, like a child leaping from descent to descent, never resting, never halting, ever smiling, ever babbling—art Thou there? In those serene solitudes of mountain and forest, ever redolent with music, ever fragrant with aroma, with no human foot ever reaching them, no human eye ever bent on them, yet so lavish in the wealth of beauty and joy—art Thou there? That vast main ever smiling and laughing, ever-leaping and singing, yet serene, so jubilant at the crest, so calm in the interior, depths within depths—art Thou there? Those radiant orbs measuring out centuries as if they were only hours, gleaming forth with light as if in eternal joy, keeping order for ever and for ever as if

marshalled out into a mighty army on a holy crusade, aye, holding together in such inseparable companionship as clusters and constellations, twin-pilgrims to an eternal shrine—art Thou there? In the holy cell of the saint alone with the Alone, mindful of no outer world, depending on no material wants, absorbed in contemplation, rejoicing in poverty, triumphing in tribulation, dedicating all the senses, consecrating all the faculties, to the one sacred function of adoration—art Thou there? In that deserted, dilapidated, plague-stricken shed, the child in its last gasps, the mother's heart upon the rack feeling the agony of phenomenal separation but hoping for eternal reunion—art Thou there? In the tornado of battle, limbs shattered, heads knocked off, trunks full of gore, nurses and doctors defying death and seeking service even at the mouth of the destroying cannon—art Thou there? That helpless, restless, unpitied, sorrowing, penitent sinner; his home a hell, his bed a rack; hands clenched in despair and folded in appeal; head burning, burning, burning with

the flames of recollection; heart tearing, tearing, tearing with the earthquakes of remorse; soul weeping, sinking, wallowing, crying in the pangs of separation and despair—art Thou there with him and in him? Thou art there. Even all that throb is only the birth-throe, the first pang of a new birth while Thou art nursing and regenerating the sick child. My beloved God, in the sand, in the stream, on the gale, on the mountain, in the seas, up in the sky, down in the centre of the earth, through all spaces, along all times, in the human heart, even in my vile heart, in the saint, ever in the sinner, in prosperity, in adversity, smiling with the truly happy, pitying the really sorrowful, wiping the tear, inspiring the hope, cheering up, sustaining, reclaiming with Thy loving arm, gathering to Thy loving bosom, harmonising discord, unifying variety—Thou art the great Peace-maker, Thou art the great Sanctifier, Thou art the all-holy, merciful, loving God! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name! Thou art really *Sachchidananda Hari*! Thou art the all-true, all-wise,

all-blissful God ! Hallowed, hallowed, hallowed be Thy name !

HYMN—*Ekkada jochina neeve yanduru thandri* (Telugu)

Thou, all-kind, all-merciful God, heed, oh heed, the sinner's moan, the plaintive tone. Heed, not that I complain that Thou art not to be seen ; heed, I beseech Thee, my plea that I feel I burn, I die, with the desire to see Thee. It is all wholly my fault, all, all wholly my blame, that Thou art not transparently manifest. Thou the *Antharyamin*, Thou the *Sarvasakshi*, couldst Thou be hidden ? It is the scales in my eye, it is the mist in my mind, it is the darkness in my heart, it is the sin in my soul that conceals Thee. Yet, it is a thin veil, it is a mere mist. Thou art here and now. Beloved of the heart, at last the soul wishes to be chaste, seeks to be faithful to Thee, feels Thou alone canst be her lawful Lord. So charming, crowned with all stars, decked with all flowers, adorned with all jewels, radiant with the combined lustre of stars and suns and all luminaries, Thou art so enrapturing. Thou the Lord of Universe, Thou the Lord of Souls, so

beautiful, so charming, so captivating, so ravishing in beauty! But this prostitute soul—oh, it ran away from Thee, it turned away from Thee, it sought lowly pleasures, it indulged in base gratifications, it pursued sinful and brutish enjoyments; and now, sin-stricken, heavy-hearted, tasting the bitter fruit of its own iniquity, it comes to Thee, *Saranagatha ratsala!* Thou all-compassionate unto those that cry for refuge! I come to Thee to be taken in, to be let in, if not as a companion, then as a slave; if not as a penitent, then as a prodigal. Thy beauty is so ravishing that it cannot be given up. Thou canst never, never hereafter be neglected. The world is on Thy side. The whole universe speaks innumerable volumes of Thy glory. All sages, all philosophers, all saints, all sinners, all proclaim Thee. I dare not defy, I dare not be indifferent. My heart desires, my soul yearns, to join this concourse of pilgrims. My own God, I need Thee first, I need Thee last. Thou art the one, sole, absolute need of my soul. Beloved God, how torturing, simply excruciating, to think how long, how

culpably long, I have neglected Thee and injured myself! I have done wrong to Thee, I have wronged myself, in neglecting Thee, in not realising Thee as my own *Prabhu*, *Pathi*, the heart's own chosen, supreme Spouse. Lord, now, now, now, I come to Thee. Cleanse me, purify me, chastise me, pass me through any purgatory, draw me through any fire, put me to any ordeal. And as Thou doest this, may the soul rise nearer to Thee! And this purification, this purification, this excruciating, torturing test and discipline—oh, fit me by it for Thy acceptance. I thank Thee, I bless Thee, that Thou art so full of compassion, there is no turning away, no saying ‘Thou art condemned to eternal exclusion.’ Thy eternal love, Thy forgiving love—that takes back the sinner whenever he comes. Thou art more anxious to save than I am anxious to be saved; Thou art more anxious to regain than I am anxious to be regained. Beloved God, how can I thank, bless, glorify, praise Thee for this supreme favour? May the days be short, may eternity be soon enclosed,

when through purgation comes illumination, when I feel my God is the delight of the heart, the joy of the soul, the light of the eyes, the music of existence, the thrilling, dancing vitality of every fibre of my life! Beloved God, Thou hast not deserted me. It is I, I, I that abandoned Thee. This soul, self-abandoned, comes back to Thee. Pity, pity, take back, rescue, transform it into Thyself. Make me Thy own, absolutely Thy own. Beloved God, blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou for ever and ever!

Thou loving God, we beseech Thee, may Thy Kingdom of love be established and extended over all hearts! May Thy loving presence, Thy holy presence, greet and bless every heart and soul! May Thy truth, Thy heavenly truth, find a recognition, a reception, in every mind and in every home! May Thy justice, Thy flawless justice, seasoned with mercy, hallowed with righteousness, be supreme, invincible, triumphant and sovereign over all! May compassion, sympathy, fellow-feeling, brotherly affection, fraternal peace, mutual whole-hearted love, be the

bond, the sole bond, the sacred bond, of relationship between man and man and race and race! May differences be settled in amity! May strife be hushed into peace! May quarrels and affrays yield place to concord and harmony! May Thy voice reign supreme! May Thy commands receive unquestioning obedience! May Thy law be honoured and practised of all Thy children, and mayest Thou be for ever and ever Master, Lord, King, Sovereign, Father, Saviour, Preceptor, Guide, unto all! Thus in every heart, in every home, in every tribe, in every nation, from pole to pole, from East to West, out of all hearts, through all voices, in all places, at all times, may there go forth one song of praise and glory in and through the lives of Thy children! May Thy myriad creatures, our own kith and kin, for ever dear to Thee and for Thy sake dear to us, all live and grow in peace and plenty and happiness, receiving our dearest attention and our sincerest sympathy! May we thus be made one with, enabled to see our kinship with, every molecule, every particle,

every atom, every mote, in Thy creation—
 Thy creation one undivided Kingdom, Thy
 creatures one undivided family, Thy children
 one undivided fraternity, Thy saints one
 undivided congregation, Thy sinners one
 undivided expectant band of penitent wor-
 shippers! Thus, everywhere and always,
 mayest Thou and Thou alone be Lord, God,
 supreme Sovereign, eternally adored Deity!
 Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and
 for ever! The mercy of the all-compassionate
 God be with us all for ever and ever, and the
 worship of the ever-adorable God be our sole
 pursuit, our single concern, for ever and
 ever!

Om ! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Ekamevadwitheeyam Brahma !

Sachchidananda Hari !

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

VIII
SERVICE:
GOD THE REFUGE.
(1916)

UDBOBHANA.

HYMN—*Neevey galthiyani nammithimi* (Telugu)

Unto Him the *Gathi*, the God, the Refuge, the Destination, the eternal Abode, the everlasting Habitation and Heaven of all souls, praise and glory, thanks and obeisances ! Our own beloved God, He is with us even before we are aware of His presence ; long, long before we seek him ; far, far beyond the day when we need Him. He is the Personal God of each one of us. The dear God ; the near God ; the loving God ; the protecting God ; the saving God ; the ever-affectionate, tenderly watchful God—He is the God of each one of us. Never, never, never have we been left alone in this world with all its waste places, with all its dark recesses, with all its unexplored possibilities. He is with us,

close, intimate, interwoven, intertwined, through and through, with our whole existence. The fabric of life, all powers and faculties, all senses and organs, all thoughts and ideas, all mental activities and moral throbs and endeavours, all spiritual yearnings, all our hopes and all our trusts, all, all are for ever springing from Him, upheld in Him, are, from beginning to end, of Him.

ARADHANA.

Thou art our Refuge: *Neevey gathiyani nammithimi*. We trust in Thee wholly, wholeheartedly, always, through all time and eternity. We seek refuge in Thee, Oh Thou all sufficing and ever-available God. Thou art our Refuge. In health, Thou art the refuge of jubilant activity. In sickness, Thou art the refuge of balmy comfort. In prosperity, Thou art the refuge of grateful enjoyment. In adversity, Thou art the refuge of trustful contentment. In the day of light and knowledge, Thou art the refuge of inspiration. In the day of darkness and ignorance, Thou art the refuge of waiting and beseeching

supplication. In the day of grace, Thou art the refuge of the heart's delight, the soul's joy. In the day of sorrow and sin, Thou art the refuge of trust and hope—the only Friend, the never-failing Friend. In time, Thou art our refuge as the all-unifying, the all-retaining, the all-sustaining soul. In eternity, Thou art our refuge as our endless progress, unceasing beatitude, limitless aspiration and growth. Thou art our refuge for every power and faculty—the refuge of the eye to see; the refuge of the ear to hear; the refuge of the nose to smell; the refuge of the tongue to taste; the refuge of the touch to feel; the refuge of the hand to hold; the refuge of the feet to move; the refuge of the mind to think and appreciate; the refuge of the memory to recollect and reproduce; the refuge of the imagination to unlock the secret of beauty; the refuge of the artist to limn forth Thy charm or sing forth Thy glory; the refuge of the poet to enter into the unexplored recesses of secret suggestion in life and in nature; the refuge of the philosopher to spell out the unity and harmony that pervades and holds

together the diverse and multifarious existences and activities of this universe ; the refuge of the sage to stand serene over the petty squalls of phenomenal life ; the refuge of the saint to realise the soul in its superiority over all temporal, material experiences and behold the lasting glory of the God-in-man ; the refuge of the sinner to weep out his sorrows, to lay bare his iniquities, to hold out arms of appeal and to seek that consolation which comes only of Thee. Aye, Thou art the refuge of all—the refuge of the child in the mother's bosom, the refuge of the mother in the child's growth, the refuge of the wife in the husband's protection, the refuge of the husband in the wife's affection, the refuge of the servant in the master's favour, the refuge of the master in the servant's obedience, the refuge of the animal in the owner's fostering attention, the refuge of the owner in the animal's dumb, unquestioning service, the refuge of the earth in the incoming rain which fertilises, the refuge of the down-pouring rain in its harbour in the earth, the refuge of the river in the

ever-receding sea, the refuge of the sea in its ever-sustaining capacity, the refuge of the mountain in its serenity, the refuge of the globe in its charm and song, the refuge of the stars in their eternal cadence and everlasting beauty, the refuge of the Sun in his unfailing effulgence, the refuge of the Moon in her charming radiance. Of all, of all, Thou art the refuge, the refuge of the universe. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou!

We seek refuge in Thee not in selfish calculation, not in helpless resignation, not on a temporary understanding. We take refuge in Thee, as a permanent settlement of life and destiny, to be Thine always, wholly Thine for ever; to be at Thy beck and call always; to be obedient to Thy commands in joy and delight; to subserve Thy purposes with grateful hearts and worshipful souls. We would be endlessly Thy servants and Thy children. We seek refuge in Thee. We behold Thee as the all-encompassing, all-embracing, all-including, all-sufficing, all-sustaining God. What need we, what can we possibly lack in, when we have Thee as our refuge; our goal,

our destiny, our self-realisation in Thee? Therein is alike the fulfilment of our destiny and the fructification of our hopes and the ample, abundant supply of our peace and joy. Thou art our refuge, our beloved refuge, our self-sought refuge, our ever-trusted refuge. Radiant with the lustre of holiness, resonant with the harmonies of peace and happiness, Thou art our refuge. We find our all in Thee—sufficient unto our needs, answering all our questions and, from stage to stage, lifting the soul in its pilgrimage and ever inspiring the hope that, even as we take one step towards Thee, we become fit and fitted for the next step. Thou art our refuge. Before birth Thou wert our refuge. In birth Thou becamest our refuge. In death we will seek refuge in Thee. In the life after death Thou shalt be our refuge. Thou art the refuge of all our actions, intentions, aspirations. Thou art our whole refuge, our complete refuge, our sole refuge, our sufficient refuge. Thou art the *Gathi, Gathi*. We bless Thee, we glorify Thee, beloved God. Mayest Thou be a refuge to our knowledge,

our abiding knowledge, our unfailing trust, our firm and sure experience ! Do Thou be our refuge in the knowledge of this privilege, the consciousness of this great blessing that in Thee we have our sole and sufficient refuge. May this consciousness be emphatic, imperative, abiding, convincing, for ever ! Oh, beloved God, we seek refuge in Thee, we seek refuge in Thee. Thou art the *Gathi*, Thou art the *Gathi*—the final goal, the eternal home, the everlasting abode, the immortal and blissful heaven unto all souls. Thou art the *Gathi*, the Refuge. *Bhavamblhodi potham saranyam vrajamah !* We seek shelter in Thee, alike as the Pilot that voyages us across and the Father that receives us in the home beyond. Thou art our Refuge. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou for ever and ever !

Om ! Thath Sath !

PRABDHANA.

HYMN—*Jaya Deva Jaya Deva.* (Bengali)

Sabake Asrayadatha ! Once again, Oh Thou, the protecting God, the protecting

Peace, the protecting Truth, the protecting Love of all, we seek protection in Thee. All, all contribute to our protection. It is as instancing Thy protecting love to all that the universe conspires and co-operates in protecting each one of Thy creatures. The seasons and times, the elements and forces, the activities and energies of nature and of man, all, all are fused and cast together into the one eternal purpose of realising, illustrating, fulfilling Thy protecting love, Thy fatherly protecting love, Thy motherly nourishing love, unto all Thy children. *Sabake Asrayadatha!* We once more thank Thee, offer our whole-hearted obeisance unto Thee. We would become the very fragrance and lustre of an offering unto Thee in gratitude, in reverence, in adoring admiration. Our whole life—oh, could it be summed up into one hearty, genuine word of praise and glory unto Thee! Thou the eternal Benefactor and Saviour! Our too feeble words, our weak, passing feelings, our meagre, meaningless thoughts, what are they, what do they count for, of what value

are they, if we presume, with and through them, to express our debt immense of endless gratitude unto Thee? Thou the *Datha*, Thou the *Matha*, Thou the Giver, Thou the Self-giver, Beloved One, we would become an offering, a self-surrendering offering, unto Thee. Our hearts and souls, our whole life, we place at Thy footstool. Do Thou deign to look at it, do Thou deign to touch it with Thy hand of acceptance, to sanctify it with Thy smile of approval. Blessed, blessed be Thou! May it please Thee to bless, in Thine own love, what we hanker, seek, strive and struggle for, in Thy name and for Thy glory! Oh Beloved One, how can we ever possibly make these poor, stale, commonplace hearts and souls of ours fit objects of regard and love for Thee? Oh, what can we possibly try to do that these barren hearts, these faithless souls, may become fruitful and trustful and be accepted of Thee? Thou art the *Datha*, the Eternal Giver. Oh, what can we give in return, even as a humble, feeble, scanty, infinitesimal token of our gratitude unto Thee? All

that Thou givest is not enough to make this base unworthy self fit to be placed at Thy footstool. Oh! Thou, Thou, Thou the Sanctifier, the holy and eternally peaceful and loving God, come and dwell, come and dwell, come and dwell in this dark dreary chamber of my heart, that I may see and know and feel and rejoice and proclaim that at last, at last, to my eternal joy, at last the Lord has made His habitation in me.

Jai! Jai! Jai! Victory, victory, victory! Triumph triumphpt, triumph! Glory, glory, glory for ever unto Him, our beloved God! May His commands be our gospels, our messages of peace and hope and joy for ever and ever!

Om ! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

HYMN—*Dhanyo dhanyo dhanyo* (Bengali.)

PRAYERS
AND
MEDITATIONS.

I

BRAHMOTSAV.

(1915)

Father, all-merciful Father, all-loving, ever-loving, only loving, individually loving, persistently loving, eternally loving Father! Before Thee we bow down. The offerings of our grateful hearts—the honeyed sweets of our devout gratitude, the fragrant flowers of our intense love, the radiant *harathies* of our glowing, enthusiastic devotion—we bring unto Thy footstool. We are the offering, we are the worshippers. We are the chorus, we are the confessional, we are the suppliant assembly at Thy footstool on this Day. On this auspicious, glorious, ever-memorable, ever-honoured Day, the Day of Thy new, spiritual, universal, eternal Dispensation, the Day of Thy saving Gospel of Truth, of Thy Royal Proclamation of Salvation, of the Pentecostal Revelation of Divine Vision and the mysterious language of the feeling heart

and the universal miracle of trusting faith and enduring pilgrimage! On this Day we bow down and render Thee the grateful tribute of our praise and prayer.

Thou hast been the ever-recurring, the ever-fresh and yet homely Revealer of Truth; and this Day we glorify Thee that Thou hast revealed this to us that Thy cheering gospel is not merely for the gifted few, not only for the profound sage, not alone for the hallowed saint, not only for the disinterested servant, but for the humble and the lowly, the ignorant and the illiterate, the uncultured and the unrefined, the lisping and the struggling, the drudging and the sorrowing—even for these, aye, more for these than for those. Thou only God, all-sufficing Lord, all-comprehensive Providence, ever-available Resource of strength and joy! Thus on this Day the flood-gates of mercy were opened out, that the world's accumulated distress, diffidence, dejection, depravity might, with irresistible sweep, be washed and baptised into trust and faith, hope and joy, strength and sanctity. Thus the windows of the heart, long closed

in superstitious timidity, were flung open that the cheering, illuminating, sanctifying light of the Eternal Sun might be let in, not only through chance chinks and occasional loopholes, but through the broad and welcome gate of prayer and trust, adoration and self-surrender. This holy Day, not in the inaudible whispers of a distant cavern but in trumpet notes from the mountain-top, the saving Gospel was proclaimed that God is not only eternally available but eagerly incoming, that not only is man searching for God but God is seeking after man that so He may regather all His creatures into His home. Ever-beloved! For this glorious Day, for this glorious Dispensation, how can we shape adequate thanks on our frail tongues? Our hearts fill with joy and gratitude, as our souls are aglow with the warmth and light of a reassured faith that even unto the humble and the lowly, the erring and the sinning, Thy revelation has been vouchsafed. The stars that have shone on through untold ages might be quenched into darkness. Time that has rolled on through immemorial ages

might come to the stop of silence. The whole creation, so rich with the manifestation of Thy majesty and mercy, might be engulfed in disorder. But Thou endurest for ever, and in Thee we abide for ever. We rejoice that Thou hast vouchsafed this New Dispensation of the Spirit unto us, this New Revelation of spiritual, personal experience unto Thy children; and we glorify Thee. In emancipated minds, in rejoicing hearts, in reverent adoring souls, we behold the hallowed infusion of the Divine shedding the light of wisdom, imparting the nectar of love, introducing the heaven of holiness; and we render thanks unto Thee. It needs now no stretch of poetic imagination to realise how, in numberless hearts and through countless voices, there is being felt and there is going up a national, universal song and hosanna of praise and glory that, not only in the cloistered academy of a cultured few but also in the lowly hovel of trustful, prayerful sorrowings, Thou hast revealed Thyself and thereto brought consolation and joy; and we devoutly thank Thee. We

feel drawn to the many sisters and brothers unseen in the flesh but known and felt and endeared in the spirit. Behold ! Thou makest every home a shrine, every *mandir* a tabernacle, every congregation a fraternity of worshippers, with Thee in the centre, in the indescribable enjoyment of communion—of sweet, beatific, rapturous intercourse—with Thee. Blessed, blessed be Thy name ! We feel a new Heaven has been opened with its shrine of ceaseless purposes and eternal fellowship in love and righteousness. We behold a vast avenue, an immense prospect, of advancement, of sacred pilgrimage along the holy course of Truth and Love up and higher up from the vale to the mountain-top and from the mountain-top on to the Eternal City of the Lord ; and we thank Thee for Thy glorious Revelation. We rejoice that, in Thy hallowed Dispensation, it is not the invigorated philanthropist, not the illumined prophet, not the sanctified seer, that has born testimony to Thy truth, but that they whom the world has rejected as hopeless, whom the wise have turned away from as

despicable, *they* have felt Thy presence. The glory of the Brahma Samaj, we gratefully rejoice, is not in the great, the wise, the gifted, blessed as they are, and we bless Thee for them, but in the humble and the lowly whom Thou hast lifted up. In them has been verified the trust that God can be known and felt by the meek. We render thanks unto Thee for this with the personal experience that we are of the humble and the lowly unto whom Thou hast vouchsafed the indescribable boon, the unspeakable bliss, of adoring and directly, personally communing with Thee. As the seed is of Thy creating, as the plant is of Thy rearing, do Thou also unfold it and sustain it. Do Thou foster it. Do Thou let it grow from strength to strength, from beauty to beauty, from joy to joy, that thus, through advancing ages, it may grow and gather life abundant till its sheltering branches cast their protection over the whole world, that under its unifying influence all may be brought to sing the glory of the Lord. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou for ever !

Om ! Tath Sath !

The Lord of all Truth, the Father of all Love, the All-saving, All-Righteous Protector of all, bless us, bless us for ever, with His Truth, Wisdom, Righteousness! May He manifest, reveal, Himself with increasing glory in Truth, Wisdom, Righteousness in us and in all, now and for ever !

Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

Harih Om !

II

(TELUGU)

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

(1909)

Praised and glorified, blessed and for ever gratefully remembered, be the supreme Lord, the Author and the Guide, the Sustenance and the Strength, the Indweller and the Inspirer, the Sanctifier and the Saviour, the hallowed, the blessed and the supremely happy One ! We bow down before Him in gratitude and in reverence ; and we offer Him the tribute of our hearts in love and adoration, in self-surrender and self-abnegation. Unto Him we owe all that is worthy in purpose, all that is enduring in goodness, all that is potent in righteousness, all that is bright in wisdom, all that is gracious in love. All *that* is from Him. He is the Indweller, the Fountain from which springs every righteous deed, every worthy thought, every sympathetic intention, every pious purpose.

He is the Light on the path to guide our pilgrim feet along the course of life from step to step, from strength to strength, even as we realise our exalted and enviable position of being His servants, His disciples, His children, in a word, His beloved. His is the beloved, beatific rapture of communion in which we lose ourselves in 'enjoyment.' And as we think of that, we feel that words are in vain, thought fails, imagination is left behind, in that indescribable, incomparable joy of direct, personal communion with Him. He is the Lord whose law is order, whose wish is command, whose purpose is destiny, whose will is power. He is the Monarch that rules by the law of love and saves through the service of righteousness. He is the eternal Heaven whom we realise in all the fulness, in all the amplitude, in all the perfection, of a regenerated humanity. We are here before that Perfect, Supreme, absolutely Transcendent, Holy Being. We bow down before Him and render ourselves unto Him in all the devotion, the trust and the filial confidence of a disciple. May He receive us! May

He infuse new spirit into us ; put new life in us ; open before us the vista of a new year, the prospect of a brighter career, the promise of a holier existence !

O Lord God, Thou art the supreme Truth, the central Fact, the abiding, the unchanging, the unalterable Reality, the Sustainer, the Spirit of things, the indwelling Inspirer, the unfailing Supporter, of all in the world. The earth in its firmness, the firmament in its expanse, the stars in their myriad brightness, the flowers in their charming fragrance, the brooks and streams in their rippling murmur, the winged birds in their melodious joy, man in his varied activities and unfailing energies, nations in their pre-destined courses,—all derive their strength, their stay, their sustenance and their glory from Thee. Thou art the store, the fund, the source and the spring of all life and activity. Every ray of light that dances around us, every blade of grass that waves around us, every germ of life that pulsates around us—all reflect Thy life and activity. Verily and really, O Lord, we live and move

and have our being in Thee. Thou art the very atmosphere that we inhale, the food and sustenance that nourishes us and keeps us hale and healthy, the inward monitor whose whisperings we hear as the voice of caution or the note of encouragement in the sinner's contrite conscience or the saint's sanctified soul. O God, Thou art the Indweller in every one of us. Thy touch we feel, even as we ascend more and more the heights of direct communion with Thee and realise more and more of Thy paternal sympathy with, and Thy watchful guidance unto, each one of us. The down-pouring of the shower, the up-springing of the crop, the return of the seasons, the rotation of day and night, the flashing of the light, the wafting of the breeze—these, O Lord, are the manifestations of Thy abiding presence. Not an inch but is enriched with living witnesses to Thy glory. For all these and more we render our thanks unto Thee. On this day, we remember Thy manifold blessings, every one of them bestowed unsolicited, unexpected and but vouchsafed because Thy mercy is

inextinguishable, Thy love is inexhaustible, Thy patience is irrepressible, Thy watchfulness is ever-wakeful. O Lord, can we ever count, can we esteem and value, these as we ought to do? The enlightening of the mind, the invigorating of conscience, the chastening of sentiment, the intensifying of love, the sanctifying of the soul, the purifying of the heart, the infusion of progressive truth, the guidance through difficulties, the light which shines through the darkness of ignorance and the mists of perversity—all these, O Lord, are Thy blessings. The mother leading the child, the father guiding the youth, the preceptor directing the pupil, the master controlling the servant, the good man serving as a guide unto all aspirants after truth—all these, again, O Lord, are the tokens and the images, the emblems and the representations, of Thy kindness. As we are prompted to dispel ignorance, to wash off impurity, to endure suffering and to put down meanness, not with the indictive spirit of a heartless crusader, but the humble endurance of a fellow-sufferer, it is Thy strength that nerves

us ; it is Thy light that illumines us ; it is Thy voice that thrills through our hearts and speaks words of hope and cheerfulness. We thank Thee. O Lord, for all this. When we think of this, O Lord, we feel that we are not of the earth, not of matter, not of a passing breath, not so many fleeting creatures ; we feel exalted, we feel as though we are a ray from Thee, the Central Fire. We feel that our destiny is controlled by Thee, our protection is under Thee, our duties are ordained by Thee. We feel enlarged, magnified, drawn out, as it were, into infinitude. We feel that we are from Thee, that Thy purpose is our destiny, Thy ordinance is our command to be obeyed, not with the reluctance of a servant, but with the cheerfulness of a disciple.

We have sinned, O Lord. We have sinned miserably, we have sinned shamelessly, we have sinned repeatedly, we have sinned with the conscious wantonness of one to whom truth comes but to be shut out and who seeks the grovelling pleasures of a selfish life. O Lord God, we have turned a deaf ear to the promptings of purity. We have been

callous to the warnings of conscience. We have been indifferent to the demands of sympathy. We have miserably neglected our duty. And when we think of this, when we ponder over this, instead of feeling as Thy children and Thy disciples, we feel that we are away from Thee and have fallen off from Thee. O Lord, we implore Thy forgiveness, we supplicate Thy mercy, we beseech Thy fatherly protection, we plead for Thy motherly affection, even as an unworthy child encroaches upon the sympathy of a father, even as the sick child gets the attention of the mother, not on any strength of our merit, but of the abundance of Thy affection. Chastise us, O Lord, work repentance in us through biting regret and scorching suffering. Burn away all that is unholy. Brush aside all that is dirty. Wash off all that is filthy. Grant us a new baptism of repentance, a new life of righteousness and truth. Guide us along a new path of morality and purity. Lead us step by step to Thy throne when the whole humanity, congregated together as one family, shall send forth a universal hymn

of prayer, praise and glory. This is our humble prayer. Do Thou most mercifully vouchsafe it.

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

III

DEEKSHA-SWEEKARAM.*

(1915)

READINGS—*The Tears of Zebunnisa* (Excerpts from
Divan-I-Makki.)

(1)

Lord ! to the faithful grant his heart's desire ;
Oh ! scourge no more this tortured breast with fire.
Thou art far off. Oh ! bring me nigh to Thee ;
Weak am I and perplexed. Oh ! set me free.
From the abyss of sin in which I dwell
Draw me, as erst Thy Joseph from the well.
Let not my tears fall wasted in the sand ;
Gather them up, kind Lord, into Thy hand.
And from the ashes of my sorrow past
Bring Thou the flowers of hope to bloom at last.

(2)

Lift the veil that hides Thy splendour,
Moon of all that is fair and sweet ;
Till the Sun, ashamed and vanquished,
bow his head upon Thy feet.

* 'Initiation' (of Mr. M. V. N. Subba Rao, M.A.)

Gracious God ! How can I live,
 condemned to solitary woes,
 Grief prevailing, groans and wailing,
 courage failing, hosts of foes ;
 All the guerdon of my worship this,
 to spend my life in sighs ;
 Fevered lips and rent apparel,
 broken heart and streaming eyes ?
 All my soul is given to love Thee,
 and the meed of my desire
 Tears unceasing, woes increasing,
 molten heart and brain on fire.
 Yet, if fate should crown my hopes,
 then, then, as long as life remains,
 Every day the sun brings round
 shall overpay a year of pains.

Thou art our Mother. Thy love is our life;
 Thy arms our home and our asylum : Thy lap
 our bed and our repose ; Thy bosom our
 shelter and our strength ; Thy smile our sun-
 shine and our joy. Thou art our Mother. As
 the child rapt in play strays away from the
 mother and makes new friendships and takes
 no thought of home, we often stray away

from Thee and lose ourselves in solitude and sorrow. But we return to Thy embrace because Thou beckonest us, Thou invitest us, Thou fondly, lovingly, yearnest for us. Thus we come back unto Thee sooner or later as children into the lap of the mother. There is nothing to be compared to, nothing to be mentioned in the same breath with, nothing to be thought alongside of, the Mother, our benign, ever-loving, ever-encouraging Mother. Thus we come back unto Thee. And we weep and grieve for past loss. We sigh and sorrow for past folly. Yet we take heart and we bless ourselves that we have at last come to Thee.

Thus the child comes to Thee, not in the spirit of defiance of others, of indifference to the just claims and natural expectations of others, but merely because the Mother has called and he cannot keep back, the Mother has invited and he cannot but obey, the Mother has shown herself and he cannot stand aloof. Thus he rushes into Thy embrace, leaps into Thy lap, gathers to Thy bosom, clings unto Thy tender, helpful arms and to Thy loving heart. And we know Thou art enough. Thy

grace is sufficient unto all his needs. In Thee the child finds his all—his strength, his hope, his courage, his aspiring ideal, and his ever-protecting stay and shelter. The child that has the mother has the world with it. The child that is on the lap of the mother is secure beyond the reach of the world's strifes and enmities. The child that can look up into the divine countenance of the mother is not touched by the storms and eclipses of life. Thou art all in all unto Thy child. From Thy bosom fed, in Thy arms folded, on Thy lap seated, by Thy smile encouraged, in Thy love citadelled and enshrined, what need hath he? Thou art all-sufficing unto the child. May the child that has thus returned unto Thee find all in Thee! Though the world might beckon him back from Thy fold, may he, by Thy grace and strength, beckon them unto Thee! Days may darken, clouds may gather, but Thy smile shall be beaming with the radiance and sunshine of joy and hope. In Thee is his trust: in Thee is his entire hope and faith. And we that are privileged to come here, may we, by our

loving testimony, by our experienced trust, be, by Thy grace, enabled to assure him and give him the hope and the confidence that he who hath the Mother hath all that he needs and shall want nothing! We that have come again and again but have unfortunately slipped out from Thy embrace, may we feel afresh the strength and the blessing of being drawn back to Thee and pledge ourselves to be first Thy children and, through that holy relationship, the brothers and sisters of all Thy children! Blessed be this day—the holy day when the Mother gathereth Her children and the child seeketh his Mother! Angels in heaven rejoice. Sinners in hell hope. All creation sends forth a chorus of praise and joy at this happy union of the Mother and the child. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

Thou art the Delight of our hearts. Thou art the Maker of the delights of our hearts. Thou art the Fountain-head of the delights of our hearts. Thou art the very Spring and Source of the delights of our hearts. Aye, Thou art Rapture, Thou art Bliss, Thou art

Heaven itself. Even here and now, the hard earth is softened and sweetened with Thy joys and ecstasies. The passing breeze whispers the message of Thy mercy. The incoming light is but the herald of Thy grace. Even here we are in heaven, because we are with Thee. We are with Thee, we are in Thee. Thou art around and about, Thou art behind and before, Thou art within, pervading, suffusing, our whole being. We bless Thee for this blessed experience, for this hallowed throb, for this holy pulse of life, as we feel it. And as we have sung, so we bow down before Thee. Thou art the Indweller in all hearts, gathering them up by the sweetness of Thy music. We bless the love of the Mother that has this day been illustrated, visioned forth, revealed, unto us. We bless Thee that unto us has been given this day to glorify Thee as the dear God of each one of us. This is Thy supremest gift unto us—that Thou hast given Thyself unto us. All the world is nothing, all creation counts for naught, against this supreme, heavenly boon. We can call Thee Father,

embrace Thee as Mother, trust in Thee as Friend, draw on Thee as Treasure, abide in Thee as the Asylum and eternally bless Thee as our Heaven. We bless Thee and glorify Thee for this supreme gift. Its value is incalculable, its joy is inexhaustible, its strength is indefatigable, its hope is irrepres- sible, its prospect of happiness illimitable, its life-time is eternal.. We bless Thee for this divine boon. Thou art the Giver of this supreme, sacred gift.

We invoke Thy blessing upon this, Thy child. Thou knowest its wants. Thy bounty can supply all its wants. Thou hast laid out its path. Thy light shall safely lead it along. From the snares and toils of the path, Thy providence shall protect it. We entrust it to Thy care. We invoke Thy blessing upon it. Knowing no sorrow except the sorrow of separation from Thee, feeling no weakness except when alienated from Thee, fearing no danger except the danger of being apart from Thee, may Thy child be sure and strong and hopeful and joyful along the path! Not through the days of human

reckoning but through the eternity of divine, infinite expansion, through all that limitless time, may this pilgrim progress upon the path, bravely, hopefully, lovingly, righteously, entering more and more into Thy shrine, seeing clearer and clearer Thy divine presence, enjoying happier and happier the bliss of communion with Thee ! May all the gifts and blessings the heart can wish for and the tongue can pray for be vouchsafed unto this, Thy child, all for Thy glory, for the establishment of Thy kingdom, for the triumph of Thy truth, for the victory of Thy love ! Thy kingdom thus come, Thy will be done and all find their peace and joy in Thee ! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever !

IV
MARRIAGE * AND DEATH.†
(1915)

Thou, Lord of infinite mercy ! We glorify Thy name that two humble souls have this day, through Thy ordaining, through the love of Thy imparting, through the mutual self-surrender and devotion of Thy inspiring, been happily, sacredly united in holy wedlock. We supplicate Thy blessings on them this day that they may be filled, inspired, illumined, occupied and engrossed with the holy sentiment of love, with the holy desire of pure, self-denying, self-realising, self-renewing devotion unto each other. May they point along the lines of Thy prescribing ! May they realise the potency, the spell, the marvellous power of the *Brahma Dharma* that has made such a union possible, desirable ! Diversified in race and language, belonging to various traditions and different surroundings, not attracted by allurements of power

* Of Mr. E. Subbu Krishnaiya and Miss Sudhamayi Ray (20-2-15).

† Of Mr. G. K. Gokhale (19-2-15).

and rank, prestige and prosperity, prompted by love and contentment; they have come together to adore Thy sovereignty. Bless them that they may conjointly serve, worship and glorify Thee. May they be harbingers of many such unifying, holy and God-glorifying weddings wherein the ideal of pure, hopeful and serviceable love may be richly and inspiringly exemplified, multiplied, all for Thy glory! May this happy union be a fertile seed sown in this eager land of *Andhra Desa* for the production of a plentiful harvest of truth and purity, joy and righteousness! Thou art the eternal Sanctifier of all souls. All marriages are of Thy making. Do Thou bless our brother and our sister that they may be even as yoke-fellows journeying along one course, making towards one destiny, throbbing with one life, pulsating with one love, in adoration and service, in joy and beatitude! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

And as we bless Thee for these triumphant joys, may we not learn humbly to bless Thee

for having taken away the blessings which Thou hast given us? If Thou art the Unifier and Sanctifier, Thou art likewise the Appropriator and Monopoliser of all souls. We render thanks unto Thee with sorrowing hearts, with grieving minds, with throbbing affections and heaving senses. And even in this national bereavement we yet turn to Thee that everything comes to pass even through Thine own ordaining. The first luminary of disinterested devotion and service to humanity whom Thou hast vouchsafed unto the glory of his life is bound to penetrate through untold generations and inspire them with sincere love and holy resolution. Serene in temper, universal in sympathies, piercing in insight, far-reaching in outlook, firm in principles, conciliatory in methods, studious in habits, he was unto all a true patriot, a genuine Indian, a worthy son of God, who ought to be reckoned with the great worthies of the race, ought to be the beacon-light that shines far and wide, set like a star in the firmament of human life. We render thanks unto Thy known and unknown purposes and

for the fulfilment of those known and unknown purposes. Unto us is given only to bow down with tearful eyes and heaving bosoms and say, Let Thy will be done! Let Thy will be done! We know nothing will be wasted, nothing will be lost, nothing will fail, under Thy providence. May the soul that surviveth the flesh enter the very spirit of the nation, flow into and assimilate the genius of the race! May all loving minds raise up embalmed *harathies*! May the fragrance of his memory rise incessantly at the altars of all Indian homes! May his example shine for ever inspiringly and encouragingly! May the generations feel, even as they appreciate and honour his name, that they owe all, all, unto the Great Giver of all good! May we all realise that the whole round of our existence is ordained by Thee, emerging out of Thee, enduring in Thee, and retreating unto Thee, here and hereafter, now and for ever! Eternally blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Om ! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

V

THE DAY OF VICTORY.*

(1916)

Jai ! Jai !! O Day of Victory !—the day of the victory of truth over tradition, the triumph of faith over conformity—the day of the ascendancy of living communion as against reported satisfaction—the day of victory when the lowly could see what was hidden from the proud, when the trusting could enjoy what was denied to the doubting, when the innocent could realise what was alien to the self-complacent—the day of the victory of fact over fiction, of self-approved truth over consecrated imagination, of pregnant reality over empty semblance—the day of victory when the earth was revealed as the store-house of of Inexhaustible Bounty, when the heavens were unfolded as the canopy of Eternal Majesty—the day of victory when the human

* *Brahmotsav Day.* (Foundation of the Brahma Samaj by Rajah Rammohan Roy : 23-1-1830.)

heart was once again attuned to the seraphic symphony of the spheres, when the oracle of conscience was cited to confirm anew the prophetic pronouncement of the ages—the day of victory when the clouds of hazy superstition were absorbed by the effulgence of the Supreme Sun, as He sought and found welcome into humble, faithful hearts—the day of the victory of the few believing amongst the many wavering—the day of the victory of the handful who throbbed in healthy heavings amidst the myriads that slumbered in fatal fancy—the day of the victory of the garnered wisdom of an age-long heritage against the choking formalism of an official hierarchy—the memorable day on which was vouchsafed the message that the Ever-Living God dwelleth in every human heart, that to none is denied the right to hold direct converse, personal and intimate, sweet and sanctifying, with the Lord—the auspicious day of fresh and cheering revelation unto a dormant and distracted world that the Spirit-God yearneth with more than a father's concern, yearneth with more than a mother's longing, for every

child-soul, that it is not we that seek Him but He that seeketh us, incessantly, indefatigably searcheth after each one of us—the hallowed day of His incoming even into us, so to ensure our outgoing unto Him—the thrice-blessed day when, ere we stretched our eager hands, He gathered us all to His loving bosom !

In fulness of gratitude, we would proclaim Thy victory, *Jai, Jai, Jai !* Glory, Glory, Glory unto Thee, the Sole Sovereign, the Supreme Parent and the Eternal Saviour of all ! ‘ We bow down in grateful homage before Thy Throne of Grace !

APPRECIATIONS
AND
REMINISCENCES.

I

SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATHI.

(1908)

The great man whose death-anniversary we are here to celebrate this evening was a true, typical and exemplary Indian, as witness how the news of his death was received with grief intensified by admiration all the country over. The function of a great man is, at one time, to conserve, to refine, to elaborate, to magnify what is of lasting, enduring and inspiring character in the nation's life and literature ; at another time, to point out the vital harmony that exists between soul and soul all the world over and thus to indicate the collateral and co-operative spirit of faith, harmony and strength that exists throughout the race and, by thus infusing a spirit not only of toleration but of filiation and fraternity, enrich the assets of the nation by a candid admission of, a devout admiration for, other aspects of Truth.

Without bigotedly keeping himself out of the latter and while showing his sympathy and co-operation to all, Swami Dayananda Saraswathi chose the former as his special field, the God-ordained mission, of his life. He disclosed to a nation half-dormant, half-despondent, how there was an inspiring element, revived from generation to generation, in the national faith and testament; and in re-vivifying, re-invigorating, re-animating the Indian Truth, gave the nation a guarantee and an assurance, nay, a hope and an outlook, that the Soul of India, by God's grace, is ordained to be vitally 'persistent' through generations to come. Thus by drawing from the fountain of national inspiration, we may refresh and re-invigorate ourselves. The service of the Swami was also service not merely to our nation but to humanity. He illustrated how the oracle that spoke in the dim past, though for a time hushed to the ear of noisy activity or busy selfishness, was roused into its usual cheer to proclaim the undying truth of the 'One only without a second,' conceived at a time when

the world was yet far, far lower down and never suffered to die out. He showed the lasting vitality of a thorough faith as the national heritage of India. Thus to the world also, he was a prophet in that he showed that not of late, not in strange distant lands, but from the earliest dawn of human thought and feeling and in this ancient land especially, the saving, comprehensive Truth has been known and cherished. He showed that, whenever the heart has opened in cheerful response to the undying Truth, there, God and man have been in living touch with each other; that Religion is not the crafty device of a community but an essential and integral factor of human nature and will, through all vicissitudes, continue in its manifold developments even unto the day when the Kingdom of God shall be established in all the corners of the world and from every heart shall go forth a hymn of universal praise of the Almighty. Blessed be the Swami, who has thus borne testimony to the vitality of Hindu faith.

We feel convinced that the Swami was a

Heaven-ordained and Heaven-commissioned prophet and sage, one in the hierarchy of Heaven-illuminated and Heaven-inspired souls sent to India as a Divine dispensation. We feel assured that it was not by a lucky chance, a happy coincidence, a random event, that the Swami appeared at that juncture and illustrated the truths of which he was the type. On the contrary, he was one of the highest specimens of God's work, one unto whom every noble endeavour, every holy aspiration, towards self-realisation was a Divine hint. That self-realisation in God as a Divine hint is the characteristic of all Great Men. Take the case of the Hyderabad floods in consequence of the swelling of the Musi River. As a school-boy, I was often on its banks; and the river was at one time so narrow that I could leap over it without any difficulty. And that little river, enriched by rains from heaven, has swept everything before it, so much so that we say in wonder and astonishment, 'What is man's strength before this mighty flood?' Similarly, in studying the current of human life, we say, 'We

cannot do that ; we are such little and negligible quantities in God's economy that it is not by us that things can be done.' Then comes a mighty specimen of humanity, a Rammohan Roy, a Vidyasagar, a Dayananda or some other Heaven-chosen and Heaven-inspired seer. And as his soul fills, as his existence spreads out, we say, ' Are these the possibilities of mankind ? Is man, too, such a potent factor in the onward march of things ? ' We think that man is cut off from God, that he is a negligible quantity. But put him in loving association, in vital relationship, with God as the Fountain-source of all strength and wisdom ; and he becomes a power before whom antiquated notions all die out, and not merely die out but become metamorphosed into living, and really life-giving, ideals.

Born in 1824, founding the Arya Samaj in 1875, what was he doing for fifty-one years ? Was that time all lost ? No, it was as much lost as all the days preceding the day of harvest are lost. He lived during these long years in the sight of God, though unknown

to the world. From the early day on which he was told by his uncle that to acquire knowledge, to store up the mind with suggestive and inspiring wisdom, was the duty of a young student, he was pursuing that one ideal with all zeal and earnestness so that he might be a fountain, a reservoir, from which the vital electricity of life might go forth; he lived under the eye of God, receiving into himself the Divine Grace that it might be available to all mankind. You might all have read this story in *The Spectator*. There was a big mansion with several rooms. One day, in a dark room, one feared there was a devil; and it was closed. The next day, another room was closed; the third day, a third room; and so on, till there was but one room left which was the parlour, which was the kitchen, which was the dining-hall, which was the drawing-room, which was everything. At last, a certain bold man came and successively remained in each room for three days, and thus regained, reclaimed, restored all the rooms from the great monster of superstition. Such are all

Great Men. Such is a Rammohan, a Vidya-sagar, a Dayananda. We say, 'We are not equal to it. There is the ghost of custom! Let us not interfere with it!' But these Great Men come and drive out that ghost of custom and restore everything to the former, may, to a better condition.

You have all heard of Rajah Mon Singh, Akbar's general. He was a very able and successful governor. His administration everywhere bore the stamp of efficiency. Akbar, therefore, decided on sending him to Kabul to subdue it—always a refractory business! But the general said, 'I cannot cross Attock. I cannot go. Attock is the limit of my activities.' Akbar replied, 'Whoever has an Attock-barrier in his mind will find an Attock wherever he goes!' Dayananda and others like him are not such men. They surmount all barriers. They leap over limitations, like Gulliver over the Lilliputians. People said, "We can't go beyond the 'black waters' at Bombay." Ram Mohan crossed the seas, went on board and off he went away. People said, "We cannot control ourselves.

We must have early marriages." Dayananda replied, " Here I am. I have remained single for a half-century. All women are my mothers and sisters." People said, "Widows are doomed ; they are condemned to suffer ; it is their destiny. It is impossible to better their condition." Vidyasagar replied, " Destiny ? Impossible ?" Sweep these words out of the dictionary ;" and he worked for the cause and succeeded. Thus it is with all these various great souls that tower above our altitude.

Let not our admiration be so circumscribed as to say, ' This one alone I should follow ; the rest I shall not honour !' It is the manifest wish of God that they should be the load-stars and cherring inspirers of all people alike. A certain man was once travelling in a train with his young daughter ; and when the train stopped at a particular station, the daughter looked up and said, ' Papa, the sky is here too !' The sky is intended alike for all the people of the world ; the stars are equally intended to guide all. The Ram Mohans and Dayanandas are

equally guides and exemplars for all people.

There is a story in the *Balāsiksha*. A father who had two sons gave them two sums of money and asked them successively to fill a room. The one brought straw and spread it all the room over. The other, with much less expenditure and trouble and in a shorter time, brought a lighted candle and put it in the middle of the room. Well, we call the one a well-meaning dunce: we call the other a clever, active young fellow. Similarly, there are people who take different views of life. There are those who view it merely on the surface. There are those who take a materialistic view of it. There are those who say that man is merely a mechanical agent. There are, again, those who say that he who is the denizen of the day is also the pilgrim of eternity; and what to the casual eye is merely a passing phenomenon is to the searching, philosophic eye a spark which, when kindled, blazes forth into a Divine illumination. They realise the truth of the inextinguishable vitality in man.

Such a man was Dayananda. He said,

‘ Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all will follow’. The work of such men is not merely of a negative, destrutive kind. It is also constructive. They not merely destroy superstitious notions of idolatry *et cetera* but also make man feel that he is under the direct personal supervision of God and that the vision is open to all. We think we are so far separated from God by a wall of sin that to reach God we have to go round or break this wall and so on. But if you stretch your hand, you find there is no wall. Only we have eclipsed God ; we have mystified ourselves. This is the message the prophets bring—the message of the direct vision, the immediate manifestation, the personal revelation, of God in each and every one of us. And when man receives this message, he feels himself at home under any circumstances ; he feels himself strengthened and intensified. Thus it is that we revere Great Men as the bringers of a new and welcome message. It is said of Emerson that he used to preach to a washer-woman who attended his discourses regularly. When questioned by some one as to what

benefit she derived from attending those discourses, she replied, 'He has made me feel that I am worth something, not a useless, despicable, negligible creature, as they say.' That was what Emerson made her feel. That was also what Swami Dayananda made the ruffian feel by his discourse with him when he came with the club to take away his life. He made the ruffian feel that some permanent factor was common to himself and the Swami. And the result was that the ruffian was elevated. Thenceforth his club became, not the instrument of mischief, but the defending arm that stood by Truth.

Such was Swami Dayananda Saraswathi. Let us imbibe his spirit and live as he did, so that, wherever we go, people may say, 'Here is one in whom God's purpose is working. Let us welcome him and be friends with him, for it is by the silken string of spiritual fraternity that he is bound to us.'

II

PANDIT SIVANATH SASTRI.

(1919)

Sisters and Brethren,

Exactly a fortnight back, almost to the very hour, came to my hand the expected and yet un-expected message, the very likely and yet unwelcome message, that he whom I had always counted, always respected, always revered as my *guru* was called to those glorious, holy, God-illuminated, God-ordained walks and paths of higher duties, of holier occupations and of more sacred joys which are the rewards of this life and for which this life is a preparation.

Render we our thanks unto God—may He keep out from our hearts every sort of pride, of self-exaltation—render we our grateful thanks unto God that, in the history of the Brahma Samaj, in the short and glowing history of the Brahma Samaj, there have been these miracles of God's grace and glory,

so many striking, outstanding, thought-arresting, heart-attracting, soul-enrapturing instances of God's grace and goodness. Of Rajah Rammohan Roy, it was said by an admirer professing even an alien faith that his life affords one noteworthy instance of God's providential and righteous care for man, by and through the rearing and raising of a witness in unexpected places and circumstances. In the dark day of India, God with His own hand lit the light that India might once again see light, love and joy. Of all miracles, real or supposed, this is the most arrestive of attention, that, as out of hard stone there jets forth a spring of crystal water, so, out of adamantine godlessness or out of self-puzzling superstition, springs up a life which is tender with the throb of faith and clear and firm with the reasoned knowledge of truth. And such an instance was Rajah Rammohan Roy, an instance of God's perennial providence under the most unpromising conditions. As the story of the Dispensation began with him, so it has gone on. We are told that it, too, is proof and evidence

of God's providence, of God's direct doings in the history of Christianity that mere fishermen, illiterate persons, were translated, transformed, into Apostles of God. That is true, and it is a matter for thankfulness. But the opposite wonder is that those in high places voluntarily abdicate their power and position and come down to the lowly levels of the poor and the humble; those enjoying vested interests cast aside all personal gains and profits; those recognised, through traditional rules of judgment, to be by Heaven itself endowed with the supreme privilege of controlling and guiding man's destiny, give up all, humbling themselves into the lowly service of man in the name of God. That, too, is, in its own way, as much a proof of God's direct dealing in the history of a dispensation. When Maharshi, who could, for the mere asking, have been a Maharajah, chose to be a Maharshi, giving up his power, place, position and privilege, and put on the garb of humility and wore the ashes of self-denial, that was a marvel of God's merciful providence in the history of this our Dispensation.

And, likewise, when one who could move thousands with his electrifying eloquence, who could, not through his solicitation but by their invitation, find welcome access to Governors and Viceroys and the Sovereign herself, when he gave up all in the name of God, assumed the apostolic garb and went forth, with truth on the lip and love in the heart, to proclaim the glory of God, when Keshub Chandra Sen went forward, that was another proof of God's providential doing for the Dispensation of the Spirit. When a Kuleen Brahmin, by custom placed in the lofty position of master of the whole society, whose word is social law, to gratify whose desire is held to be the salvation of one's soul, when he snaps, literally snaps into shreds, the mark and token of his supremacy and wears the garb of the poor servant of God, this is another proof of the providence of God in the history of the Dispensation of the Spirit. The humble to be exalted into the apostle—that is one way in which God vindicates His greatness. The powerful, the lofty, the proud to be humbled and enlisted into the lowly

service of man—this is the other way in which God vindicates His glory. There are innumerable such instances of God's doing for the good of the Brahma Samaj in the short history of our church, for which we all join to render thanks unto His mercy.

He whose translation to higher spheres is the occasion for our meeting here to-day, was a great man, a prince among men, a prophet among souls, a saint and sage among spirits. What could he not have been, had he chosen some other path ! Not quite thirty, already holding a promising place in the Educational Department with a brilliant University record providing his credentials for future promotion and elevation, on the one hand ; and faced, on the other, with poor means and humble position—often the excuse for adhering to a lucrative place when duty calls elsewhere—he in a moment gave up all in self-dedication to the service of God. What could not a man of undoubted ability, moving eloquence, inexhaustible energy and activity, commanding character and winning disposition, what could he not

have achieved for his own exaltation, if he had chosen to seek self before God! He gave up all, not from external pressure, not from the stress of circumstances, but from the spontaneity of dedication to a great cause. All honour to him; all honour to the God that led him on to it! He lived, not merely a life of poverty, but a life of privation; and that, without a word of dissatisfaction, leave alone complaint. He felt the greatness of the task before him, the nobility of the vocation, the glory of the end, he had placed before himself.

“Unknown delights are in the cross,

All joy beside to me is dross,”

says Madame Guyon. These delights of the cross Pandit Sastri assumed unto himself. All joy beside was to him dross!

And how cheerful was his temperament always! The very laughter of the man was a sunshine of the heart. As we all know, we laugh from different motives. There is the cynical laughter, the sardonic laughter, the empty laughter, the crowing laughter. But there is the laughter of spiritual fellowship, the laughter that comes from the

heart, in which there is the sunshine of God. Once I was asked to preside over the Provincial Social Conference at Ranipet. Pandit Sastri was then at Madras. Having taken my leave of him, I went and presided. And when I came back, Pandit Sastri asked me, "What did you tell them in your address, Venkata Ratnam?" "In your name, sir, I told them to be cheerful." "Why, do you always find me cheerful?" And even with the familiarity I always enjoyed with my *guru*, my soul's parent, as when Coleridge asked Lamb whether he found him sermonising and Lamb, in his own broken, stammering way, blurted out, 'I ne-ne-never saw you doing anything else,' so I said I never found him anything but cheerful. And he burst into a laughter and said, "Yes, yes, you have correctly characterised me. Our religion must teach men to be cheerful. Too long have they taught in this country that the longer a man pulls his face, the deeper is his spirituality. Our religion must make men put on a broad face and teach them to be cheerful." Think not it is a cheerfulness that

comes out of indifference to others' concerns. No, no, it is the cheerfulness that comes out of the confidence that

“ God's in his heaven—

All's right with the world.”

Madame Guyon has said,

“ Sorrow and love go side by side ;

Nor height nor depth can e'er divide

Their heaven-appointed bands.”

And the man of God is a composite character, a reconciliation of contraries, just as God Himself is a reconciliation of contradictions, with a tear in the eye and a kiss on the lip—the tear to baptise, the kiss to bless ; the tear which says that God is a compassionate God, the kiss which says that God is a loving God. Thus this cheerful man was also a sorrowing man, grieving that God's process has been arrested but hoping that God's providence shall prevail. He shed tears, not with the bitterness of disappointment, but with the trembling responsiveness of fellow-feeling. Such was Sastri Mahashai ; and such were several others in the Brahma Samaj.

Another trait in him was that he was a fund of stories—there was no end of anecdotes. We, shallow people, think that anecdote is only a mark of dotage. We think that the man is shallow and he cannot think of abstract principles and maxims. It may be so in some cases. But in the case of Sastri Mahashai, anecdotes were the stepping-stones of details in life on which he rose to the higher self. Every one of these he used as a crystallised principle, a concretised maxim, a truth distilled into the essence of experienced facts. And how these came, not with the deliberate effort of one who seeks to make himself agreeable, but with the spontaneity of one in whom they were all deposited as a treasure for narration and edification! With what kindness and glow and with what charm and persuasiveness they came! He did not hesitate to narrate anecdotes about himself, because they were facts, they were truths. Once a man came up to us talking incoherently; Pandit Sastri said he would see him by and by because we were going to a place

one a fixed appointment. After he went away, Pandit Sastri said, "Last night's lecture must have made him mad. I sometimes make men mad." I said, "Yes, you have made many mad men sober also." That is the complex nature of the messenger of God's truth—to make mad people sober and calculating people mad. On another occasion, I observed that he promised to close a service and sermon in an hour and took two and a half hours! And he said, "I am like the drunkards who began with drinking only one bottle and did not give up till they consumed many a bottle and raised such a hue and cry that people came and thrashed them into silence. So you must have silenced me!" Wonderful man, wonderful man, that received everything in the finest grace! This fund of stories in him amused the casual hearer, instructed the thoughtful and endeared him to kindred spirits. This man, they felt, was ever watchful, ever on the alert. There was not an incident in his life that did not leave an impression on his mind, not an occurrence that did not make its mark, not a

scene that did not have its own direct bearing on his life. Just as Shaik^h Sadi, the author of *Gulistan*, must have been ever awake to have stored up that inexhaustible treasure of anecdotes which is the attraction and value of his work, so, a Sivanath Sastri or a Raj Narayan Bose or any of these story-tellers must have been watchful souls receiving impressions and storing them up. This is the difference between a conscious and an unconscious life. So many of us who think they are living conscious lives, lead unconscious lives. The little negro girl in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', when asked when she was born, replied, "Methinks, I growed." That is unconscious tree-life, and we all lead it. In big forests, botanists tell us, there are huge trees which, when cut across, show rings in the wood of the trunk which are a chronicle of the life of the tree. As many rings, so many years. We find in big trees, when cut through, five or six hundred rings showing that they lived through five or six hundred years. Even thus in man, if the conscious soul is wide-awake, all these various experiences, focussed

and crystallised into vivid realities of remembered instance and example, make the life what it is, rich in principle and rich in practice.

Again, another characteristic of Pandit Sastri was that he was a man of invincible faith—a man whose faith nothing could shake and subdue. Once he undertook a prolonged mission tour—starting from Calcutta, passing through Behar, old North-West Provinces, Lahore, Central India and the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and back again to Calcutta—all that taking three months. And he began that great tour with the magnificent sum of six rupees in his pocket! He made his plans, he sketched out the details of the tour; but he never asked himself what money would be necessary. On his way to the Station, he goes along Cornwallis Street, calls at the Sadharan Samaj Office and asks the Secretary, “I am going on a mission tour. Will you give me money?” And the Secretary says, “I have only six rupees.” “All right, give me that; I will go as far as that can take me, and God will give me the

rest." And God provides the rest! He goes to the next station and delivers a lecture. The next day he makes up his mind to go and packs up his things to start; and somebody comes up and says, "I have listened to your lecture with great pleasure." "I am going today." "Yes, sir, I want to contribute three rupees to your travelling expenses." "Yes." He receives it. He steps out. Another gentleman gives three rupees. Then he goes to the next station and gets down. He knows nobody there and is strolling up and down the platform. A man falls prostrate at his feet and says, "I am blessed." "Who are you, please?" "I am a compositor in a Press. I did some little stealing and was handed over to the Police. You interceded, you pleaded for me and got me excused. Then I felt what a departure it was, saw what it was to be good. I have changed, I have turned over a new leaf. Please come to my house and be my guest and deliver some lectures here." Next day, again, he makes up his bundles and waits at the Station. The porter comes and says, "It is only

10 minutes to the time. Please come on.”

“Yes, my friend, but I have no ticket.”

“I have already purchased a ticket for you, sir. Please come in.” Thus he went; on and on, till he reached Lahore, met Sirdar Dayal Singh, who gave him an escort and some money. And Pandit Sastri told me, “When we had to part, we counted all the money we had. It was just enough for his ticket and mine. Thus God helped me.” And he added. “How is it Father Muller had to pray for his wants and I never prayed?” I said, “Your mission is itself a prayer.” He laughed and said, “Yes, it is true.” That was the man of faith! He came to Madras. We opened his portmanteau. We found only two ragged shirts. We put in new shirts and he said, “God bless you.” A man hands him Rs. 10. “Did you know that I required it?” “No, sir.” “I am in the habit of sending ten rupees every month to my mother, and today is the due date. God has sent these ten rupees.”

Thus he lived on the bounty of God, according to His favour, as it came every day. And

how scrupulous ! He goes back to Calcutta, goes to the Sadharan Samaj and says, "A watch and a silver plate have been presented by my friends in Madras. I do not know whether they are for me or for the Sadharan Samaj. Anyhow, it is a very trying situation for me. What is spontaneous may become customary, and what is customary may become compulsory. Thus the poor begging *sanyasin* in course of time becomes the *Jagad-guru* with a crown of gold and a throne of silver. You will decide who is to take it, I or the Samaj." And the Sadharan Samaj says, "Do accept it, it is meant for you." Such was the scrupulous honesty of the man —no presents to be accepted except with the knowledge and assent of those whose missionary he was ! Once finding he was not able to go out for one full month on account of ill-health, he said, "I cannot receive the monthly allowance." And they could not force him to take it. He spoke the truth as he felt it, when he was here at Cocanada last in the year 1907 —"Mind not money ; do your duty and God will send money." That was the faith of the man.

Yet, what was at the bottom of all this was the sense of direct responsibility to God. He did not know of any suffering he had borne for the sake of faith. He accepted everything as it came. He was even brought to the verge of death, when the Mother rescued him. "But for my 'scholarship', Venkata Ratnam, I should have starved with my wife and child"—(now Mrs. Hemalatha Sarkar.) That resolute will, that stern unbending faith, was at the bottom of the man. He trusted in God, and God blessed him. When Pratap Chandra Muzoomdar was in England, at the close of an interview with John Bright, that great orator asked him, "How do you, Brahmo missionaries, live?" "They have no fixed allowance, no definite fund. They only accept what comes to them." "Oh then, it is the apostolic spirit of dependence on the providence of God! Yes, after all, that is the best." Yes. On whom can man depend but on Him who caters to the ant in its hole and the nestling in its nest? On Him alone, if we are wise and truly thoughtful, can we depend. Keshub found out that secret; and

they were happy all their days. Brahmic history teems with instances of how God miraculously caters to the needs and wants of His children. And of such faith and trust in the God of Providence Pandit Sastri is an outstanding instance.

He bore the message of the Brahma Samaj all over the country; and he was the first apostle of the Brahma Samaj to the Telugu Districts. In this town, he had wonderful experiences during his first visit. He was received with pomp and lodged comfortably in a big house. But, for having committed the grievous offence of receiving a tumbler of water from the hands of a Mahammadan servant, he was soon sent out. The host could not understand how a Sastri holding conversations in the sacred language with Pandits could contaminate himself by accepting water from the hands of a Mahammadan. He was asked to find shelter elsewhere. Next day he was on a pial. A meeting was held. The Collector came. The D. M. & S. O. came. Various others came. They were all pleased with the address and had a general talk with him on

religion. The host found out that he was, after all, an important man ; and so he struck the happy *via media* and gave him a bangalow where he could safely indulge his social vagaries. Whether in the bangalow or on the pial, whether with Pandits or with a Mahammadan servant, he was the same. When, on the pial, the sun shone and the rain beat, some one brought a tatty and held it as an awning to protect Sastri Mahashai. A friend of mine who accompanied him to Madras and the South had said that I should become a missionary, that I should become a Pandit Sastri. When they returned from Bangalore to Madras, the same friend said, “ Brother, for goodness’ sake, never become a missionary. It is not only poverty but misery.” Yet, Pandit Sastri bore all this and more with the hilarity of a man who was, as it were, rising from power to power and expanding from glory to glory. Then he went to Rajahmundry before Mr. Veeresalingam Pantulu was able to perform the first widow-marriage. He gave a lecture, many young men gathered and he put new life into them. What Mr.

Veeresalingam, with his earnest soul and persuasive life, had been trying to elicit from the young men was ripened and matured into action by Pandit Sastri's lecture; and shortly after, the first widow-marriage was celebrated. Thus this harbinger of divine truth and apostle of divine light, was the great supporter of the social reform cause which has made this part of the country, thank God, known and respected elsewhere as an advanced part of the land. What he did here and at Rajahmundry he did elsewhere. He came to Cocanada on three occasions—1881, 1890 and 1907. He visited different places; and whenever he went, he carried with him his authoritative conviction. A friend at Masulipatam said, "The peculiarity about Pandit Sastri is: he told us what you have told us several times; and yet, as he spoke, people felt as if they listened to it for the first time." No wonder. He spoke from the heart; and I spoke from the lip. He said what emerged from his heart; I gave out how I heard that gospel. He spoke as a man who expressed what

he felt in personal experience and with the authority and power of one who was commissioned and with the elation of rejoicing in preaching to the world. Thanked be God, in our part of the country his noble mission has been followed so worthily by other workers—Babu Bipin Chandra Pal, Mr. Shinde, Babus Mahendranath Bose, Amrita Lal Bose, Braja Gopal Neogi and Hem Chandra Sarkar. Before all these, Pandit Sastri was the harbinger. We owe unto God our grateful thanks for having vouchsafed to us a messenger of His truth so eloquent, so inspiring, so informing as Pandit Sastri.

He was, in the palmy days of his eloquence, a most moving speaker; in Bengali he was one of the greatest speakers. Colonel Olcott mentioned him among the great masters of logic and religious philosophy. Sir Monier Williams, in his "Records of Religious Thought," spoke of him as 'a man of unquestioned ability and eloquence.' Ranade and others regarded him as a modern *rishi* to whom all votaries of reform ought to make a pilgrimage. A

unique soul altogether! If we calculate the stress and strain amidst which he had to carry on his work with faith, and judge amidst whom he worked—on the one hand, very impulsive people, and on the other, towering intellects—we realise the greatness of the man, which he owed entirely to his devotion to God.

To me personally how great, how deep, how profound have been his kindness and goodness! Though it is a fact that there had been humble beginnings, inner throbbings, silent processes, yet when it came to the decisive step of coming into the Brahma Samaj, humanly speaking, it was due to Pandit Sastri. In 1881, when I was in the F. A. Class, Pandit Sastri delivered a series of lectures. In 1882 I sought out Mr. Buchiah Pantulu; and ever since, for weal or for woe, I have been connected with the Brahma Samaj; and it has been my ambition, though, it must sadly be confessed with a sense of humiliation, an unrealised ambition, to do something worthy of one whom I admired and revered—Pandit Sastri. Unto him I owe the inspiration which

said, 'Not through exalted position, not through cheap popularity, but by loyal adherence to the cause of truth and faithful pursuit of the principle of life-giving love will a man attain the end of existence.'

I feel that he was one of those but for whom the Brahma Samaj could not be what it is. He dealt out his heart and parcelled out his spirit to a thousand souls which are re-incarnated, re-duplicated, multiplied selves of him, as we find here and elsewhere in the Brahma Samaj. And yet how tolerant, how appreciative of merit, with none of that fanaticism which comes of narrowness of conception and unbalanced mental condition ! I remember, after a discussion of the merits of vegetarianism, over which people were sharply divided, one of the advocates of vegetarianism wanted to score a crowning victory over his opponents because Pandit Sastri was a vegetarian by principle ; and he said, " Is it not by being a vegetarian that you have attained this fine spiritual progress ? " Pandit Sastri replied, " I do not know ; with the great example of Maharshi on the other side, it would be

presumptuous on my part to say so. Vegetarianism is more a matter of individual taste and sentiment than a factor in the spiritual growth of man." Such was the constant desire and propensity of the man to hold the balance evenly between rival claimants for recognition. If, as some think, in the narration of certain events and incidents he allowed his personal proclivities to prevail, I am satisfied that his intention was not to show off his own cause or to show up the opposite cause. It was simply his sincere, apostolic eagerness to present facts in the dry light of truth; for Pandit Sastri was a person to whom justice and righteousness were always dear.

He was a man who abhorred all violence in any propaganda, whether social or any other. And God forbid that the Brahma Samaj should ever make itself noted and notorious as countenancing any violence in social, political or religious propaganda! Yet the spiritual ministrations of this chosen servant of God were not withheld even from the worst. When some unfortunate young

men who took to bomb-throwing were incarcerated and were about to be dealt with by the extreme penalty of law, he, without subscribing to their methods, yet had the necessary insight to know the needs of the souls of these young men. Pandit Sastri went up to the bars of the jail-cage and affectionately blessed them—not the unworthy acts, but the souls that, amidst all vicissitudes and fluctuations, continued to be dear to God. That was the true minister of God, not seeking popularity through assuming a taking cry, not shrinking from the discharge of unpopular but virtuous duty if, in the name of God, it had to be done. That was the minister of religion, never a faddist, never a fanatic, never pusillanimous. Blessed be the name of the Brahma Samaj that has produced this great and good man, this worthy messenger of God, this noble expression of truth, this worthy example of righteousness! Blessed be the name of God now and for ever!

III
D. P. BAPAIYA.
(1908)

In the very presence of God—the Author of life, the Ordainer of death, the Indweller of every soul, the Companion of every devotee in heavenly bliss—in His holy, serene and awe-inspiring presence, we are met here and now with hearts filled with sadness, with minds puzzled with the mysteries of existence and with souls yearning for the comfort that comes only from the Unseen. We are come together, with sighs and tears—the marks of human helplessness; with prayers and supplications—the stay and hope of feeling souls. There is the aching heart within, and there is the void world around. Yet the heart would repose in the sweet memory of long association, in the holy sympathy of inspiring company and in the reassuring vision of a love that never faileth. We feel the problems of life creating a most painful agitation in the very depth

of our hearts ; and we long to seek the enlightening and tranquillising presence of God to solve these problems. We thus seek the presence of Him from whom alone knowledge can come by awaiting the Master's further wishes, trusting in the Master's further revelations and hoping for the Master's unfailing mercy and the undiminishing survival of all that is beautiful in life.

Almighty Lord, the Knower of hearts, the Author of souls, the Originator of worthy aspirations and the Generator of all noble deeds ! Speak Thou unto us in our hearts and souls and in the convincing language of divine wisdom and vouchsafe unto us the cheering message of a deathless life and love. And as we throb and feel after the departed friend, into our hearts and souls come the melting tears of sweet and invigorating hope, the assurance that, drawn away, he is not lost—called away, he is not denied—and, physically translated, he is yet spiritually abiding in us ! And with the assurance come also the resolve to emulate the nobility of the life whose crowded chapter is so early closed and the piety

of the soul which was so unflinching and unswerving, so trustful and cheerful, through these many years of a devoted and consecrated career ! And as we thus seek the inspiration of a worthy example, may we be uplifted into a higher altitude of knowledge and of trust where death shall appear as but a transition, a mere partition, an ordained passage in that great progress of life here or elsewhere which is the one unbroken Divine purpose fulfilling itself through ages and generations and concentrating towards one eternal abode where God is the presiding genius and love is the all-proving law ! O Lord God, may the tears of sorrow be so touched with the rainbow-hue of hope that, as we sigh, we may see that the sighs are natural to the physical body, while sight is the embodiment of the soul ! Thus seeing and thus believing, may we rise to new duties with inspiring ideals and cherished memories ! O Lord God, the Ordainer of death, the Companion of souls, may we go forth hopeful of Thy help in the performance of those new duties !

Thou art our Master ; therefore we rejoice

in Thy service. Thou art our Inspirer ; so we lay bare our hearts to Thee. Thou art our eternal Companion ; therefore we confide in Thy guidance. It is by Thy ordaining man lives, feels and thinks. At Thy summons man leaves this for nobler regions. Yet O God, in Thy all-wise ordaining, Thy all-ruling providence, Thou hast formed this relation of friendship for an inspired example, as a sustaining strength. Thou who chooseth to draw soul to soul and cement heart to heart, may we be sustained by the faith that, though the form may change and the scene may shift, yet unto the heart there is no permanent loss of vision or of communion ! Ah Lord of life and death, dost Thou sanction that hope ? Is it approved of Thee ? Or is it a mere fancy ? Mayest Thou grant us the grace to realise the endless fruition of the promising faculties budding forth in such progressive souls into truth confirmed, wisdom matured, goodness expanded and devotion deepened evermore ! Hope suggests, and the heart rejoices to feel, that we are here only to lay the foundations. Now wetted and nourished with

sorrow, now once again sustained through adversity, may we endure from age to age and grow larger from generation to generation! Can it be that all this investment of truth and love and holiness, so abundant and promising, will all be rung out of existence? Ah, no; truth is triumphant; love is eternal; virtue is immortal; and goodness is never to be exhausted. We feel that sorrow has darkened our prospect and that we toiled together in vain as co-workers and as brethren. But, O Lord, as deep as are the associations, so inspiring are the suggestions. Thou art eternal. We are Thy children. We will be everlastingly glorifying Thee here and hereafter. May we be sustained with this hope!

We are brought here this evening to discharge a duty which various feelings enjoin on us—the melancholy duty of lamenting a heavy loss, the pious duty of cherishing a dear memory and also the loving duty of saying ‘adieu’ and yet ‘welcome’. To me, who have had the privilege of knowing the dear friend under hallowed associations,

perhaps for a longer period and more intimately than almost all else here, this is really marked and noted event in my life. As I have felt and as I have often told others, this is an event which has made this world poorer and death dearer ; an event which has left me devoid of his presence here below but yet plants a hope in the hereafter ; and an event which stirs me to long to be freed from the allurements of physically tempting life, not in the commercial sense of higher advantages, but in the spiritual signification of seeing a holier vision and living a nobler existence. This event has thrilled through every fibre of his dearest friends. While it is usual to say, 'Let Thy will be done,' we are now face to face with the new and pressing enquiry, 'What is Thy will ?' This is an event which, unlike many a passing event of the time, is significant of more than one inspiring truth. I have been made to feel now, if at any time in my life, that, as the poet has said, one crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name. Here is a brief life but a rich one, and an early death but a gentle, peaceful,

pious passing away. And as I take a review of the many leading incidents of this noble soul, I feel that it is not the lack of opportunity but the absence of spirit that makes life so very barren in us. Here is a young man who lived for a few years, yet with a matured spirit that a sage may covet, with a serene repose that a saint may envy and a sustaining faith which a prophet may follow as an example. He passed through these years as the inspiring example of a noble life to his survivors. And as we dwell upon that life, we feel how much is possible for man and how deeply inlaid this life is with Divine presence. He was a man of twenty-five years more or less. In this short span of life, he illustrated in himself, in so many ways, the rich possibilities of youth well spent and of opportunities sacredly employed. We also feel compelled by the physical absence, with more than usual emphasis, to dwell upon that life, that so we may sustain and intensify its healthy influence within us. By its very withdrawal, it is made more significant and its spirit is better brought home to us.

Let us first of all take that which most prominently attracted the attention of everyone—his serenity, his calm-reposing, unshaken trust that all is well in spite of seeming troubles and sorrows. Smarting with an uncommon degree of pain, dissociated from dear ones, shifted from place to place as a homeless wanderer, deprived of those pleasures which are dear to all, looked down upon by those who ought to have understood him better, deserted by those who ought to have been brought close to him, suspected by those who ought to have confided in him, neglected by those who ought to have clung to him and entirely ignored by those who ought to have followed his way, he had no complaint against any person, except the general one of man's negligence in that man is so blind to the goodness of God. That serenity which was so striking, which often misled others as to the nature of his complaint, and which one made light of, was the marked feature that struck every thoughtful observer that stood by him even for a few short hours. If he was able, too, at the close

to sink to a gentle sleep, it was because the soul had been well prepared. Serenity makes death happy. Plato said, 'The end of all philosophy is to teach us how to die serenely.' There is no miracle other than a serene death. This is impossible unless there has been an antecedent serene life. To seek a serene death with and after all our petty strifes and rivalries, jealousies and sorrows, is to ask God to reconcile night with light and storm with calm. Serenity of life is the guarantee of serenity in death. No serenity in this world is possible except that of piety, faith and trust in God. People are callous to, unmindful of, of what is going on in the world unto whom, however, the passing days are all in all. That serenity is bad ; it is a spurious serenity which in reality is a selfish concern. Indifference to what is passing is not serenity but fatality. True serenity is that which is sensitive to all things around but at the same time composed with the assurance that One is guiding everything. It is this serenity that is the treasure of every pious soul. He may be shedding tears, sighing, rapt in meditation, downcast

for the time being. Yet, he is like the centre of the earth. While the earth revolves, the axis remains the same unmoved. Thus serenity predominates. How many virtues spring from that serenity ! Where the world is disposed to find fault, it pauses and judges. Where the world is intolerant, it is sympathetic. Out of it comes, above all, that cherishing hope which says, ‘ The tempest passing over us will pass away, and the peace of the Divine will come sooner or later—the peace with the prosperity ordained by an eternal God. It is wide awake ; yet at its bottom calm and composed. It is like a pendulum that moves but yet does not shift. At a certain point it is fixed. The man of serene faith is fixed in the basis of divinity. By its spiritual pendulum the world marks its time.

His second characteristic, patent to his friends and relations, was the many-sidedness of his sympathies. There was no direction in which human destinies could be improved and human union and unanimity could be fostered but called forth Bapaiya’s sympathies. The two contradictory features in his

character were : its apparent determinateness to one particular course and its apparent accommodating tendency to various things. And, in fact, it is the case with every great man. It is the incapability to understand the various sides of man that creates unpleasant criticism. But Bapaiya was wide awake to the necessity of spiritual progress and of social reform. Often such a person appears self-contradictory. Take a leader like Mr. Veeresalingam Pantulu. The man who praised him yesterday runs him down to-day. This incapability to understand creates petty differences and unpleasant criticisms. What is true of Mr. Veeresalingam Pantulu is also true of Bapaiya. In his narrow compass of life he could bring various susceptibilities into marvellous harmony. Where there was a call for human exertion and progress, there was his heart. No wonder that his many-sidedness handed him over to occasional misconstruction by others. Even in relation to the Deity, excepting those few select souls who invariably honour Him, we all cling to Him on one side ; but directly the other side

is revealed, we seek to drop off. On a miniature scale, that is the experience of every Divine soul. Jesus has his Peter who says one day, 'Come what may, I stand,' and the next day, 'I am no follower of his.'

We save our outer coverings, allowing the soul to be corrupted. They are people of a higher order to whom the soul is the inner gem and the body a mere covering. Unto them the inner gem is all in all. The inner soul is the piercing light which cannot be clouded. That is the difference between a firm soul and a faltering spirit. Unto one like Bapaiya, the soul is the essential thing, while the skin is the outer covering and the body a temporary receptacle; and as long as there is the gem within, it must shed its lustre in all directions. 'Love me, love my cause, love my prosperity' is the world's motto. 'Love for its own sake' is the motto of great men. They make love supreme and universal; and we make it subsidiary and individual. They stand up for the triumph of truth and love but not, like us, for that of a certain cause or party.

They are, therefore, better situated for realising the underlying link within all human activity. If there was a soul which trembled sensitive to nationalism, it was Bapaiya's. He at times would exclaim, 'O, how our young friends are running after one thing! When will they seek for the other things?' The balancing of *all* things constitutes the variegated richness of a person like Bapaiya. Unconditioned appreciation of goodness and truth is characterised by one thing all the world over—singleness of purpose. When Marcus Aurelius was asked why he was good, he said, 'I am good because that is the natural condition of man.' The rule of life is conviction but not calculation. Out of that conviction there comes a crisis. The only pause before it is the feeling, 'Am I equal to the task, or how shall I be made equal to it?' Hence the prayer to God for firmer determination; and then and thence the crossing of the Rubicon! This is the secret of our friend's *anushtanic* Brahmaism. Outward conventional considerations never weigh with a person like him. It is a

conviction ; it is a sacred obligation ; and it is a heaven-ordained mission. As such, it is a silly question to ask him, ' Why do you do it ? ' Carlyle asks, ' What is the use of great men ? ', and declares, in answer, that they are themselves a use. There is no other measurement by which you can calculate it. The truly great man is a use in himself. He is the central organiser from whom all usefulness goes forth. You stand in the presence of a splendid picture drawn by a master-hand. Then your soul seems to melt into that of the artist. You look with contempt at the person who disturbs you in that state. Similarly, great men are the master-pieces created by the Deity. Their very presence is useful. Burke was a man of true genius. One day when Burke stood in a shower of rain, his friend remarked, ' There is a wisdom coming spontaneously from him ! ' That is the characteristic of all devoted souls. True life is a rich, beautifying symphony, a marvellous vision, a potent fact, a mighty force. Thus, he of the noble spirit might be bed-ridden ; and yet his presence was enough to keep up our larger

human activities. As Carlyle has said, we weave all around us so many cobweb-theories. We believe those cobwebs to be mighty fences! But a great man comes. He realises that these are webs. And he passes on without any effort; and they themselves disappear! As Dr. Martineau has it, the supremacy of the moral law is such that it is binding upon a lonely individual living in the wilderness as solemnly as upon a man in society. Life is a sacred trust. Every hour and minute must be employed. Laziness is not merely repugnant, but also something impossible and inconceivable, to him who has some divine spirit in him. There are people to whom duty is but a secondary thing. But duty merges into spontaneity with him to whom life is a sacred trust. And when it has done so, the next thing is that life is then measured not by years but by thoughts and deeds. Such a person crowds into one hour all the fervour and intensity, the inspiring zeal and the slow and hard-earned acquisitions, of any ordinary man. Unto such a man, day and night cease to come in their

alternate conditions. He has become a part of Nature. He knows no repose. He is above time ; and when death comes to him, it comes to him merely as a passing event but not as a warning. A man of knowledge knows that a big comet is appearing but does not tremble. To such a man there is no change. Death has come and gone. It is neither an alarm nor a call ; but it is a transition. So Mahārshi Devendranath Tagore has said that death is merely the tearing of a veil. When Jesus was crucified, the curtain in the Temple of the Jews was torn and the Glory was revealed. Unto such a man, the flesh is crucified but the soul is liberated. While he sinks, he is serene. He has no fear, no anxiety and no anguish. It is all one stretch of flight through the dark portals of death. What is heaven to that man ? It is, as it were, the mingling of the river with the ocean, the kindling of a blaze of new light before which the whole world is illumined. Heaven is the abode of peace without tediousness ; the realm where law prevails without its rigour ; and a fraternity where all people are brought

together, each soul working and weaving itself into other souls. He feels that this world is an ante-chamber—a narrow passage and a first entrance into a larger glory where light never fails, truth never shakes and love never becomes feeble. Heaven is the Fulfiller of sympathy and trust. Even as a hidden spring gushes out through a narrow opening and spreads itself forth, so also the noble activities of life spread out freely without any the least limitation of mundane barriers and overflow in their fulness through the gorge of death. So we need not feel sorry for him. Yet there is an inseparable pain out of which there is born a new life with a deeper attachment. He is part and parcel now of that new birth in which new relations are allowed !

Thou, Supreme, Awe-inspiring Presence, we bow down before Thee. Thou hast drawn him into Thy presence. We are sure of his abiding peace and unfailing happiness in Thy bosom. We beseech Thee to put into us the knowledge and trust that this separation is a temporary, passing thing and that, in holier

relations, though physically gone, he is spiritually nearer and dearer unto every one of us. While iron custom might trample upon that poor child, may Thy love sustain her as an object of compassion! Let others feel her to be an object of sympathy and service and sisterly love. O Lord God, may the example of the departed soul illumine us and strengthen us! May we feel how rich is human life! O Almighty Lord, may we render our thanks for these examples of good lives in the Theistic Church! Mayest Thou grant the asset and guarantee of strength to this Church! May Thy Kingdom be thus extended as the one permanent abode of truth and love, glory and righteousness! May we all be knit into one family, and may we all live as members of one home! Do Thou mercifully vouchsafe it unto us.

Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

IV
M. SUBBARAYADU.
(1918)

Gentlemen,

We are here in the shadow of a tremendous calamity. With the sense of heaviness oppressing the heart, it is literally impossible for anything like an appreciable expression of all that one feels on an occasion like this. Nothing is so arresting to the thought and aching to the heart as the sudden and unexpected elimination of a most promising and widely beloved person. If in the course of nature the relief of death comes to one who has passed through the ordinary career of life, though the eye may fill and the bosom may heave, yet there is the prayer in the soul that at last the translation from here to hereafter has come to one rightly prepared for it. But in a case like this, where there was so much to do, where the potentialities were so rich and the promises so inspiring, we really

feel it a shockingly great blow that has come too suddenly. It is like a bolt from the blue. Yet, as we have just been rightly reminded, under the oppression of heavy sorrow we owe it as a duty to ourselves, as well as to those whom the loss so dreadfully and terribly crushes, that we should express the very meagre and inadequate but none the less very hearty sympathy due to them.

It has been my melancholy privilege to have known the deceased for a longer period than almost every one else with perhaps the exception of him who has been these eleven years and more his chum in company and his yoke-fellow in office—I mean, the Assistant Dewan. My knowledge of and love for Mokkaapati Subbarayadu date back to 1894, when he was a student of the Fifth Form in the School Department of Noble College at Masulipatam. He drew my attention first on an occasion which was rather the reverse of this one, when we were giving an affectionate send-off to one of my colleagues going out on furlough. Subbarayadu, with his instinctive aptitude for Telugu verse, though yet in

his teens, a student of the Fifth Form, came out with some Telugu verses which were very touching, characteristically closing with a humorous verse. The humour of it lay in this. The language was English, and the characters were Telugu. It threw us all into bursts of laughter, and I naturally asked myself who the lad was that contained so much humour in him. This was the beginning of our mutual acquaintance. The next year he came into the Sixth Form—the lowest class which I was teaching. He gradually worked his way up to the B. A. when I left the Institution. He was somehow not noted for industry at that time. He did not do justice to himself in the University career, as judged by the ‘results’. To every one who knew him it was quite patent that his talents were of a high order. He passed his examinations with ease, with so little of what the world calls industry; and in this lies the proof of great intellect. To all who knew him it was a disappointment that he did not get a first class in the Matriculation or F. A.; and some

of the disappointment was attributed to me that I was drawing him away from the sole duty of a student—confinement to books. I always felt that the days of one's education at school or college ought not to be wholly devoted to book-lore and that there should be strenuous efforts in acquiring knowledge and laying in ideas and judgments which in after-life would help the personality to develop in different directions. It is interesting how a student occupied in a diversity of pursuits passed his examinations and went up to the highest class without the least hitch. In the B. A. he topped the list in English in the whole of the Northern Circars and was awarded the MacDonald Gold Medal. In Telugu, he was known to be, of course as may very well be expected of a member of Mokkapati family, a Telugu scholar. With him Telugu scholarship was a hereditary acquisition and not a personal accomplishment. We all know how his family is noted for scholarship in these parts and a grand-uncle of his had the renown of being cyclopædic in Sanskrit lore.

Subbarayadu kept up his studies even after the B. A. and acquired knowledge in other directions. So far as his arduous official labours permitted, he spared no pains to improve himself. He had a respectable knowledge of English literature. But in the realm of thought and sentiment, he was easily familiar with a Martineau or a Maeterlinck, not with the bookish acquaintance of one who reads and remembers, but with the spirit and affinity of one who studies and assimilates. Equally keen was his intellect on subjects relating to the historic and economic questions of the day. Any one who had occasion to draw him out on these subjects would have surely known how wide his acquaintance was in these directions. More than his talents, what struck any person that had any capacity to see beneath the surface was his superior order of development in the moral realm. It is a truism that greatness in morality lies in the comprehensiveness, so to speak, complexity, of character. It is not in undue development in one direction, be it of honesty or of purity or of veracity, that

moral greatness consists, but in a comprehensive, all-inclusive development of the various cardinal virtues. It is in this many-sided moral development that the moral greatness of an admirable human being lies. Though it may sound paradoxical, yet it is true that in Subbarayadu's character the chief and most distinguishable point is the reconciliation of apparent contraries. How to be stern and yet sympathetic, how to be just and yet merciful, how to be keen and yet forgiving, how to be honest and yet recognise human weakness—it is in the reconciliation of these contraries that a man's greatness lies. One may be stern as duty and tender as sympathy, both simultaneously. That is the enviable privilege of a chosen few in whom shines a ray of the central Luminary of all souls. There are really some in whom the Divine dwells. They serve not merely as towering pinnacles of admiration to lower natures but as examples that provoke imitation and emulation.

My dear old pupil and friend had a wonderful combination of keen intellect,

tender sentiment and stern will. If he had been firm, he could not be moved. If sympathy was deserved, he rendered it not merely unsolicited but at times unexpected. It was necessary that intellect should be applied; he did it with unsparing rigour to the investigation of a question with searching scrutiny and persistence. It may be said of him that some of you may remember an Englishman said with profound patriotism about the Thames, that he was

“ Though deep yet clear, gentle yet
du

Strong without rage, rich without
flowing

It is this capacity to come up to a high standard and yet subdue all in his application to the daily round of duties that constituted a worthy public servant as well as a friend. No wonder, then, that Sree Narayana Guru has described him as a remarkable person, a distinguished officer and a warm friend. As for myself, I used to feel wonder many a time and oft how one

Close attention was demanded by the momentous concerns of a great Estate like this could, nevertheless, remember those small concerns, minor details and little points which often, even with those who have not so much of preoccupation, so readily escape recollection. I never wrote a letter even on the most trifling matters but got a reply in due course. This capacity for varied and multifarious work which, according to some great thinkers, is the characteristic of genius was one of the distinguishing features of Subbarayadu also.

Whoever thought a life so pregnant with the possibilities of incalculable worth and unimaginable development would be thus cut short! I do not know how, but somehow feel that, after all, he was a martyr to his own sense of duty. He never spared himself. A single holiday he never knew. Leisure under any conditions he would not tolerate. Work was the very breath of his life. How to further the interests of the Estate, how to serve the best interests of him who stood in the triple relationship of the pupil whom he

had trained, the master whom he served and the friend whom he always consulted—this one all-engrossing subject so occupied the whole mind that he denied himself the ordinary necessities and bare requirements of a healthy and comfortable life. In him is once again found an illustration of the universal truth that in this world nothing can be done, no results realised and no work begun except through self-sacrifice. He was a most exemplary instance of self-sacrifice. I knew him as a boy, watched him as an adult, walked with him as a companion, prayed for him as one of his well-wishers, took his counsel as one who trusted in him. And I feel that to have commanded the regard, won the affection, and kept the confidence, of one like Subbarayadu is one of the greatest prizes of one's life. Unto the Estate the loss is simply incalculably heavy. I know so little of the inner details of the administration of the Estate. But having had the friendship of persons who were intimate friends of the Dewan and the Rajah, I have often been led to ask myself, ' If at any time there should be

an occasion even for a short period of a year or so for Subbarayadu to stand aloof from the system of the administration, how could it go on?' He was not merely the motive-power that gave the impetus in all directions, but also the inspiring grace which gave life and, what is more than life, the sense of devout attachment to all that are concerned in the Estate. Therefore, the loss is tremendous; and we do feel that it is not possible, at any rate in the near future, to replace him who has left us so suddenly. Somehow, I have a belief, a belief that is quite justified to my individual soul, that man is not merely flesh and blood, not even this wonderful machinery which thinks and feels and wills and acts; but what vitally endures is the ever-expanding being, beginning as a personality, growing as a reality and culminating as a glory. I therefore feel that, though the physical body is withdrawn, the vital, essential being perseveres and is for ever perpetuated and though to the physical eye he is withdrawn, to the feeling heart and to the affectionate spirit his companionship

is not merely not cut off but will be vouchsafed in an increasing degree in the advancing years before us. Whether physically present or abiding in spirit, he is not lost to the Pithapuram Estate, not lost to us. That his spirit will be blessed with perpetual peace and abundant happiness there is absolutely no doubt. That good can ever fail and God can ever be foiled—that is impossible. He must grow in the bosom of Eternal Goodness from strength to strength, from glory to glory and from bliss to bliss. And as he thus grows, I do believe in an increasing measure that the influence felt by all those that had the privilege of coming into contact with him and his spirit will continue to work on them for good. With this hope and this faltering expression of the worth of my very dear old pupil and ever-valued friend, I invite you all to join in expressing our sincere condolences to the bereaved family and the much afflicted Rajah.
